VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL

A, A′

[A, A Prime]



STORY & ART BY
MOTO HAGIO



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STORY AND ART BY MOTO HAGIO

ENGLISH ADAPTATION BY MATT THORN

Touch-Up Art & Lettering/Mary Kelleher
Cover Design/Hidemi Sahara
Editor/Annette Roman

Managing Editor/Hyoe Narita
Editor-in-Chief/Satoru Fuji
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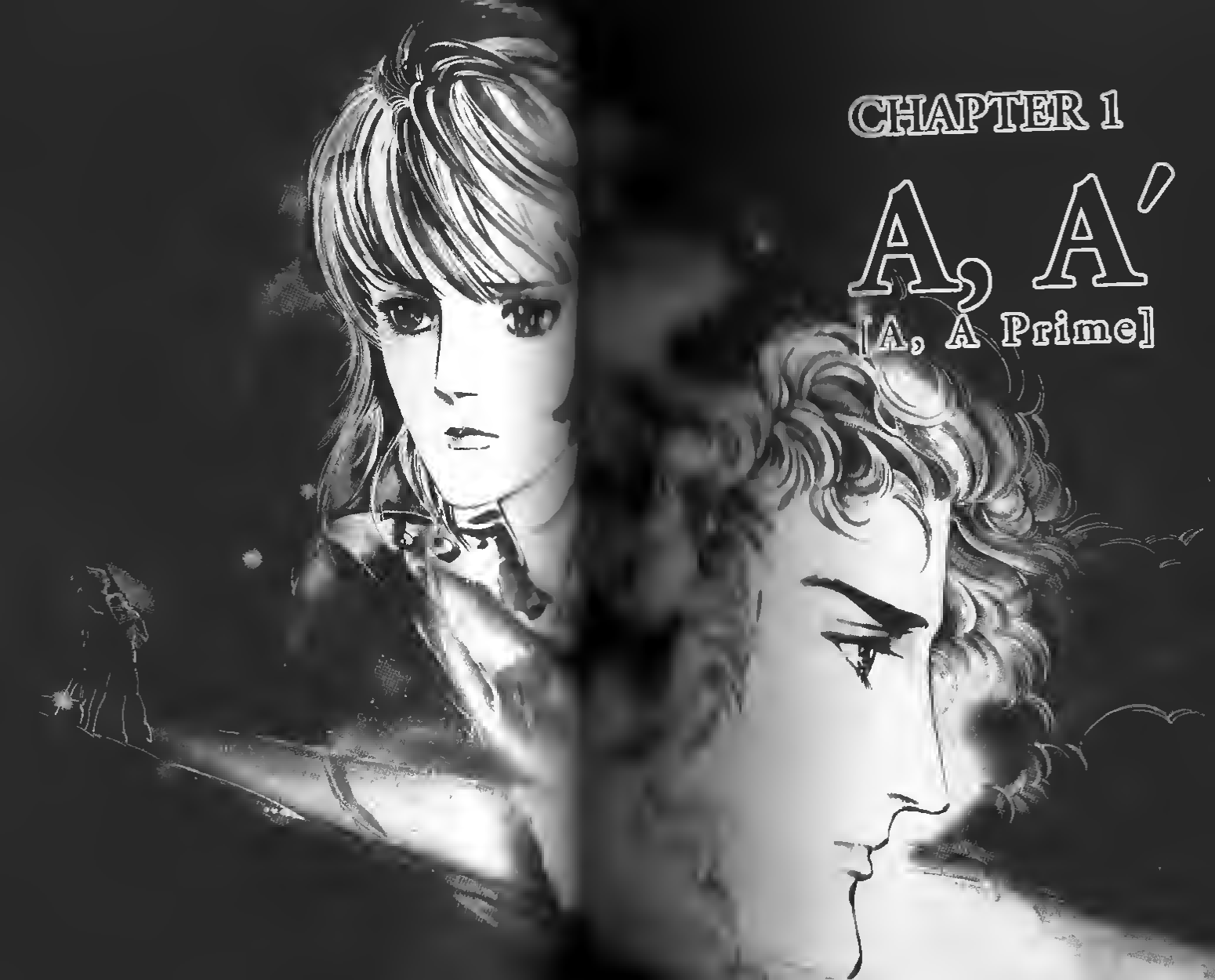
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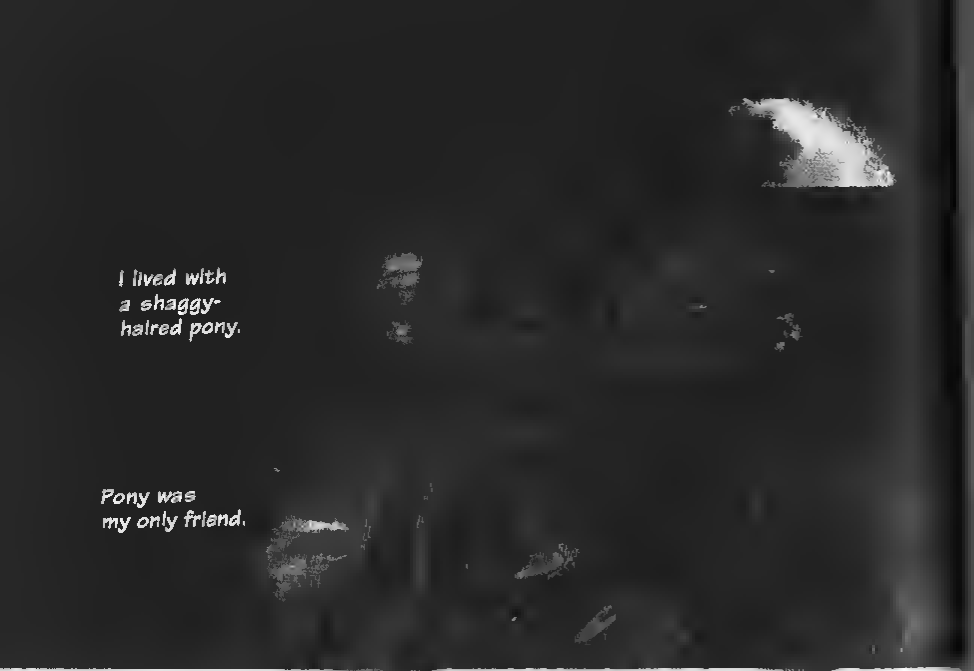
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VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL

A, A′ [A, A Prime]™

STORY AND ART BY
MOTO HAGIO


CHAPTER 1
A, A′
[A, A Prime]


I lived with a shaggy-haired pony.
Pony was my only friend.


But when I was eleven, Pony fell into a crevice and died.
I cried for the first time in my life.

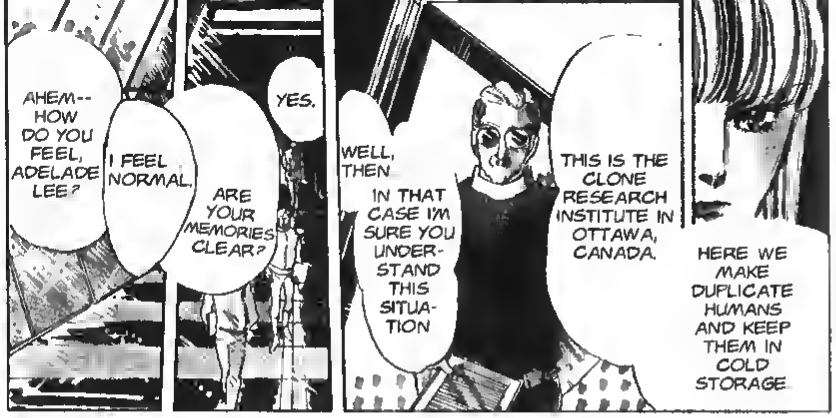
A, A′ [A, A Prime]

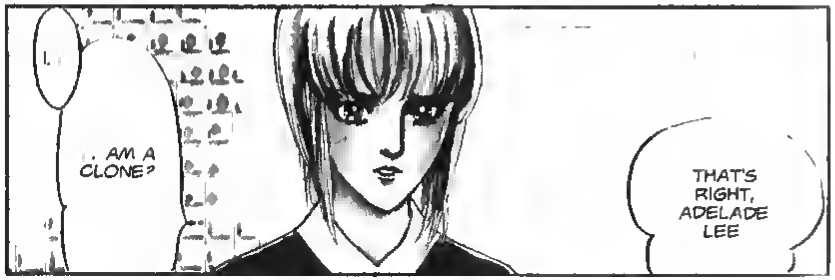

THERE ARE TEARS COMING FROM THE EYES OF THE A' BODY.

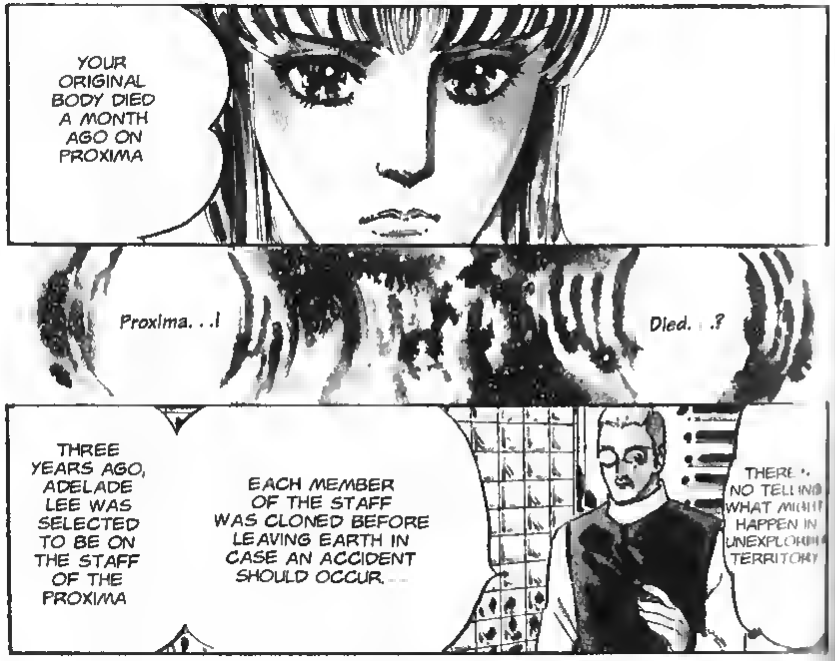

THAT'S NOT UNUSUAL. SHE'S ABOUT TO BE BORN.


THE MEMORIES WE'VE IMPLANTED. . .
. . .ARE TRIGGERING DREAMS.


THE THAWING IS GOING SMOOTHLY
A' HAS AWOKEN.
HOW DO YOU FEEL, ADELADE LEE?





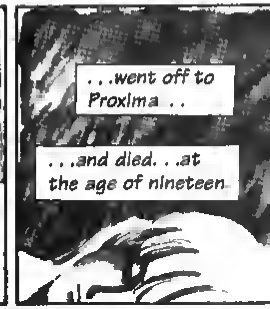










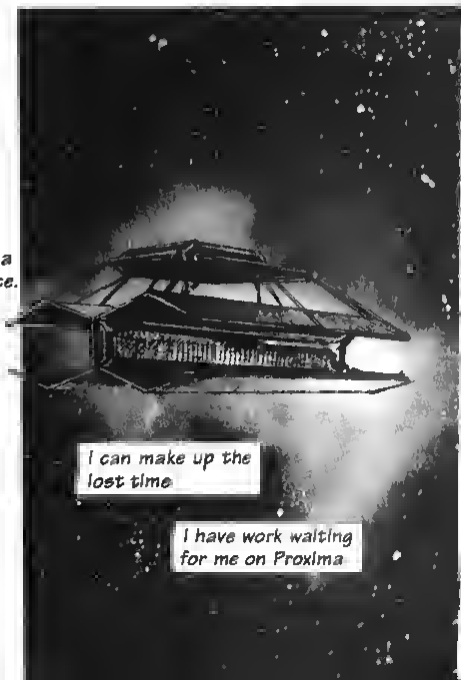








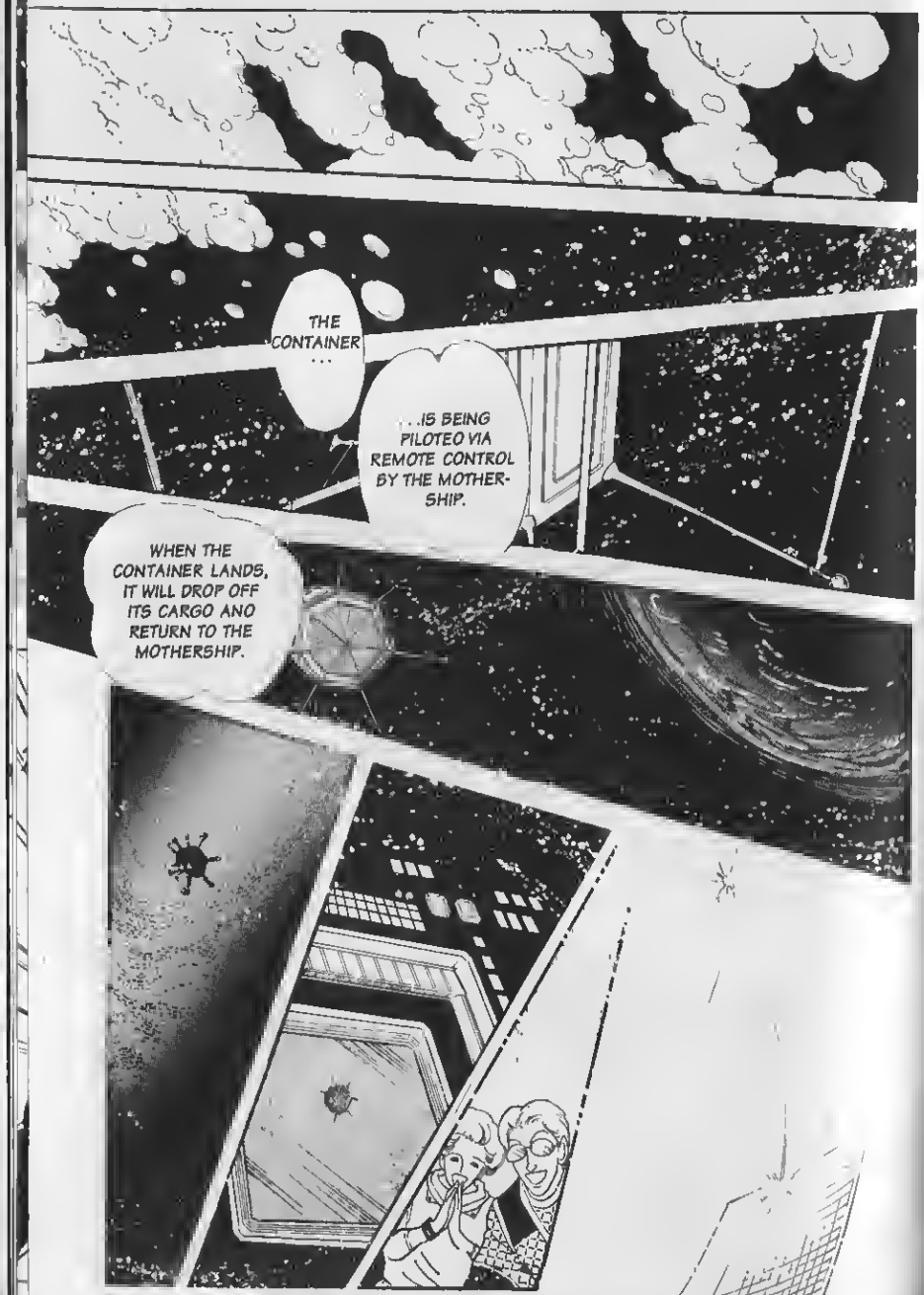
Three years doesn't make much of a difference.




Proxima's fifth planet, "Munzel."
The twenty-year plan to develop the planet Munzel is now in its third year. The staff numbers twenty-three.
ADELADE LEE IS COMING BACK!
ADDY!?
ADDY!
THE MESSAGE JUST ARRIVED.
SHE'S ABOARD A TRANSPORT CONTAINER THAT WAS LAUNCHED INTO ORBIT FROM A BIG INTERSTELLAR SHIP
I'M SO HAPPY I JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN SHE DIED
IT WAS LONELY WITHOUT ADDY AROUND. NOW WE'LL BE A COMPLETE TEAM AGAIN!
REGG!

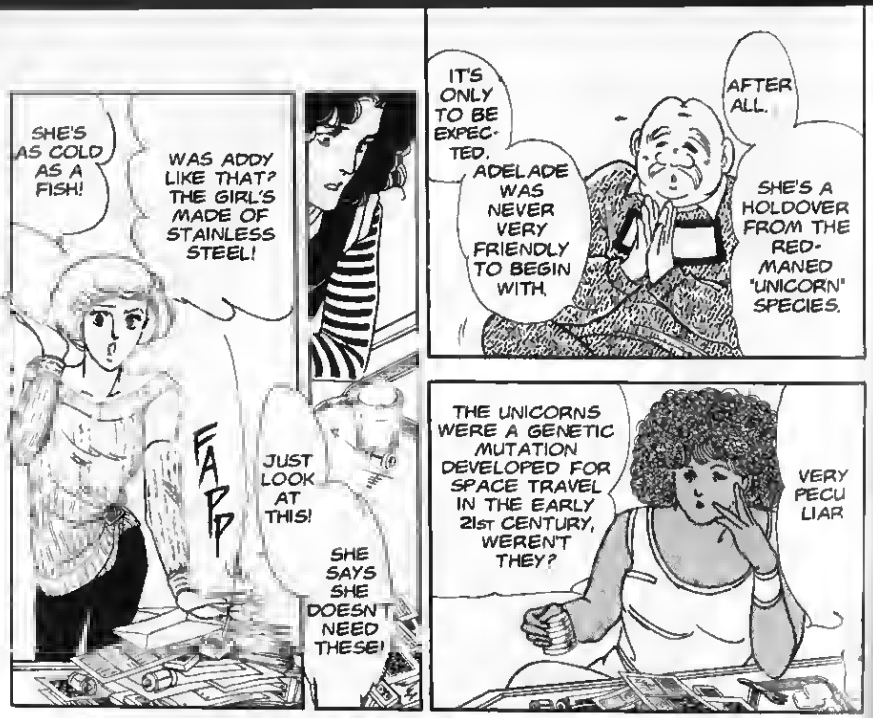
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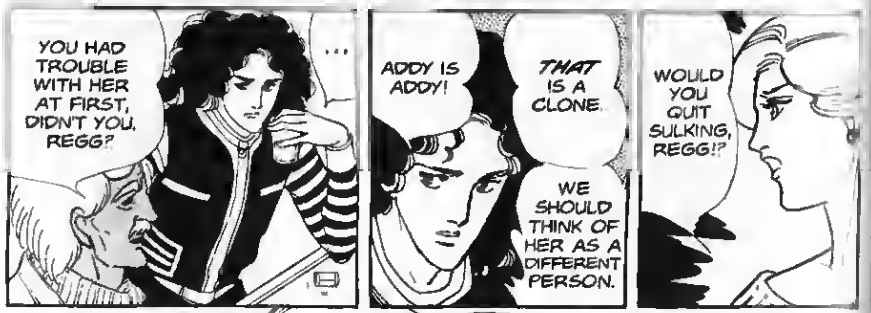

REGG BONE!
ADDY'S COMING BACK TODAY!
IT'S NOT HER.
WHAP
WELL, IT'S A CLONE, OF COURSE . .
. . BUT SHE'S THE SAME PER-SON!
TO HER WE'LL ALL BE STRANGERS. BUT WE'LL BECOME FRIENDS AGAIN IN NO TIME!
AFTER ALL, WE ALREADY KNOW ADDY.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'SHE'S THE SAME PER-SON'!?
REGG!
YOU WERE THERE!
ADDY WAS SWALLOWED UP IN AN INSTANT. . .
by that flowing lee .
. . .right before our eyes.
BUT NO MATTER HOW MANY CLONES WE
. . NONE OF THEM WILL BE ADDY!
ADDY .
. . IS GONE


THE CONTAINER . . .
. . .IS BEING PILOTED VIA REMOTE CONTROL BY THE MOTHER-SHIP.
WHEN THE CONTAINER LANDS, IT WILL DROP OFF ITS CARGO AND RETURN TO THE MOTHERSHIP.


PLEASED TO MEET YOU MY NAME IS ADELADE LEE
ADDY!
WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE BACK!
IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU!
ADDY!
WE GOT ALONG GREAT BEFORE AND I'M SURE WE WILL AGAIN!
REGG!
LOOK! IT'S ADDY.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU

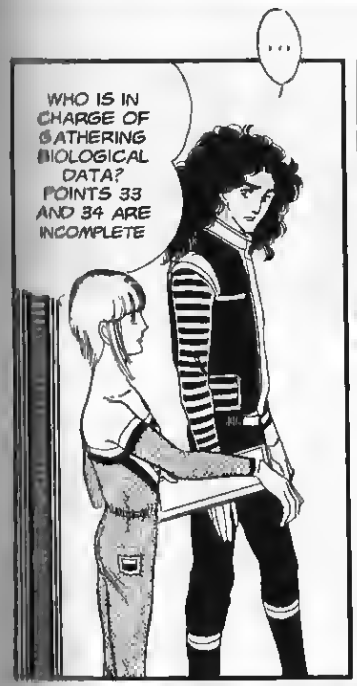

HOME IS WHERE YOU MAKE IT, AS THEY SAY.
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS PLANET OF ICE, ADELADE?
I BELIEVE I CAN MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME WITHIN TWENTY DAYS
HERE YOU ARE, ADDY. COFFEE WITH CREAM
THAT WOULD BE GREAT
I PREFER BLACK, PLEASE.
WHA-?
BUT YOU LIKE CREAM IN YOUR COFFEE, DON'T YOU? YOU ALWAYS DID BEFORE.
NO
NOW I REMEMBER! IN THE BEGINNING ADDY DRANK NOTHING BUT STRONG BLACK COFFEE WHILE SHE WORKED.
THEN SHE HAD STOMACH PROBLEMS AND STARTED DRINKING IT WITH CREAM.
YEAH, YOU WERE THE ONE WHO TOLD HER SHE SHOULD ADD CREAM, REGG!
THAT'S RIGHT. WE HAVE TO THINK OF HER AS THE ADDY SHE WAS THREE YEARS AGO!
A SIXTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL.
THAT'S RIGHT.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, REGG!?
TUMP!
TMP
TMP
REGG?
Addy, as she was three years ago!?
The same eyes.
The same hair.
That red mane.
But that's all.
You can make a hundred copies . . .but a copy is a copy!
AW!!
I'M DISPOSING OF UNNECESSARY POSSESSIONS
FAFP
I PAINTED THIS PICTURE.
IT'S YOURS?
THEN I RETURN IT TO YOU.
ADDY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!? THOSE ARE ALL YOUR THINGS
PICTURES... GIFTS FROM US...
BUT...I GAVE THIS PICTURE TO YOU.
PLEASE ACCEPT IT AGAIN.
ADDY.
I CAME TO PROCESS STATISTICS AND MANAGE COMPUTERS.
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT PICTURE BEARS ANY RELEVENCE TO STATISTICS OR COMPUTERS.
WHA-?


SHE'S AS COLD AS A FISH!
WAS ADDY LIKE THAT? THE GIRL'S MADE OF STAINLESS STEEL!
FAPP
JUST LOOK AT THIS!
SHE SAYS SHE DOESN'T NEED THESE!
IT'S ONLY TO BE EXPECTED. ADELADE WAS NEVER VERY FRIENDLY TO BEGIN WITH.
AFTER ALL.
SHE'S A HOLDOVER FROM THE RED-MANED "UNICORN" SPECIES.
THE UNICORNS WERE A GENETIC MUTATION DEVELOPED FOR SPACE TRAVEL IN THE EARLY 21st CENTURY, WEREN'T THEY?
VERY PECU LIAR


YOU HAD TROUBLE WITH HER AT FIRST, DIDN'T YOU, REGG?
...
ADDY IS ADDY!
THAT IS A CLONE.
WE SHOULD THINK OF HER AS A DIFFERENT PERSON.
WOULD YOU QUIT SULKING, REGG!?


WHAT!?
SO SHE'S A CLONE! THAT'S FINE WITH ME!
BUT YOUVE BEEN PUSHING HER OFF ON US EVER SINCE--!!
SH K !!

A, A′ [A, A Prime]


...
WHO IS IN CHARGE OF GATHERING BIOLOGICAL DATA? POINTS 33 AND 34 ARE INCOMPLETE


WELL?
THAT'S MY JOB!
I HAVENT FINISHED IT YET.
ARE YOU BEHIND BECAUSE YOU'RE SHORT OF HELP?


ADDY USED TO HELP--
THERE'S NO NEED TO MENTION THAT, DASH!

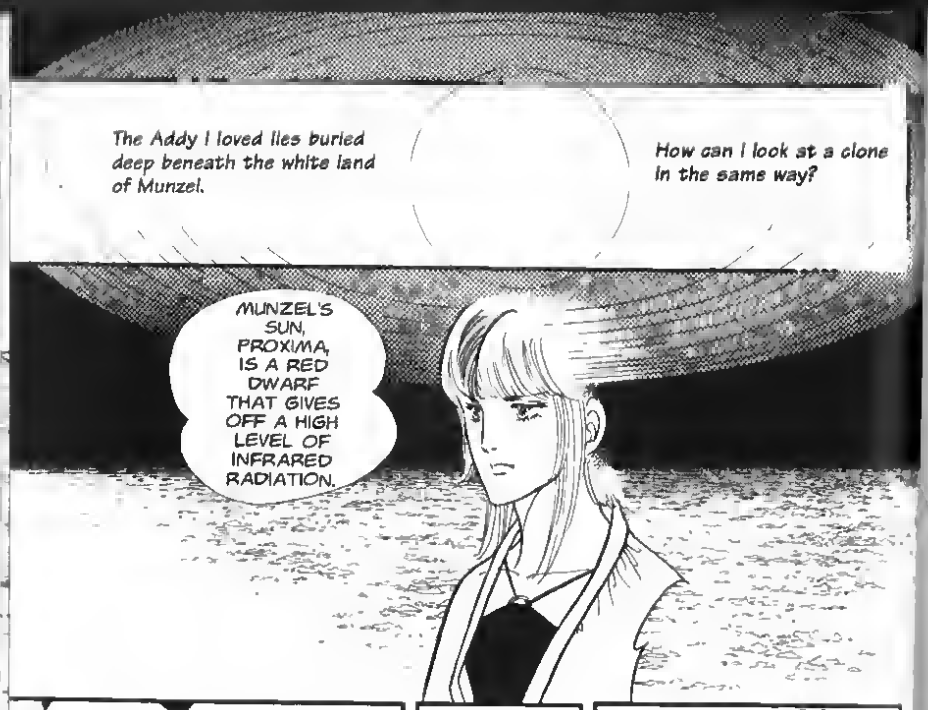

YOU DON'T HAVE TO YELL! I CAN HEAR WELL ENOUGH! AND WHY IS THERE 'NO NEED TO MENTION' THAT ADDY USED TO HELP YOU !?
ADDY. . HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS. I CAN GATHER THE PLANT-LIFE DATA IN NO TIME!
PLEASE! THIS IS NOT THE TIME--

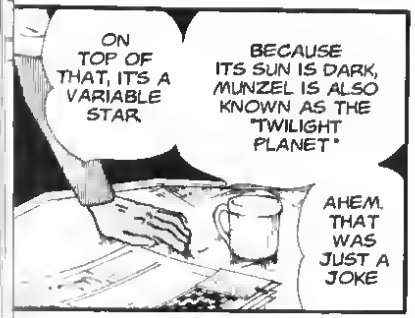

I'LL START NOW!
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE ADDY WITH YOU!?
...
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
BAM!


REGG BO--
KREEE
AH!
FAPP
WHOA
WHY DID YOU FOLLOW ME!? THAT DOOR ALMOST HIT YOU IN THE FACE!
HERE ARE THE ITEMIZED FORMS FOR THE POINT INVESTIGATIONS
...
...
THANK YOU
Is this clona as much of a klutz as she was?
Addy was always tripping and bumping into things...
Those eyes. That hair.
A red-maned unicorn...

A, A′ [A, A Prime]

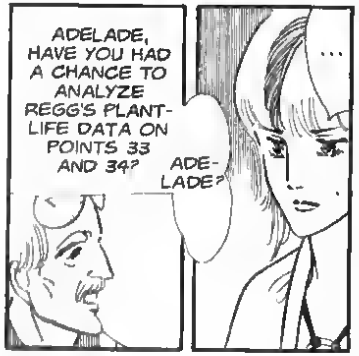

Regg Bone.
They tell me I'm a member of a very rare species.
A unicorn?
That's a great name. I haven't heard about the unicorn species before.
I didn't know about it myself until I grew up and joined the space development program.
I always thought this hair was just a variation.
My species is an artificial mutation.
We're called 'unicorns' because of the ridge on our skulls and our red manes.
It's only very rarely that an atavism like me appears.
I wonder why your ancestors didn't build a unicorn empire somewhere around Saturn...
Addy...
Addy...
That red mane that was swallowed up by the white land...


The Addy I loved lies buried deep beneath the white land of Munzel.
How can I look at a clone in the same way?
MUNZEL'S SUN, PROXIMA, IS A RED DWARF THAT GIVES OFF A HIGH LEVEL OF INFRARED RADIATION.

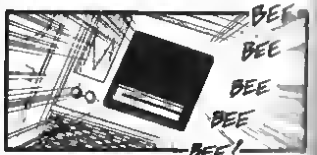

ON TOP OF THAT, IT'S A VARIABLE STAR.
BECAUSE ITS SUN IS DARK, MUNZEL IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TWILIGHT PLANET."
AHEM. THAT WAS JUST A JOKE


WHAT IS THAT STRANGE SOUND?


HM
WHA


ADELADE, HAVE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO ANALYZE REGG'S PLANT-LIFE DATA ON POINTS 33 AND 34?
ADE-LADE?
...


DO YOU HEAR ANY-THING?
! BEEP!

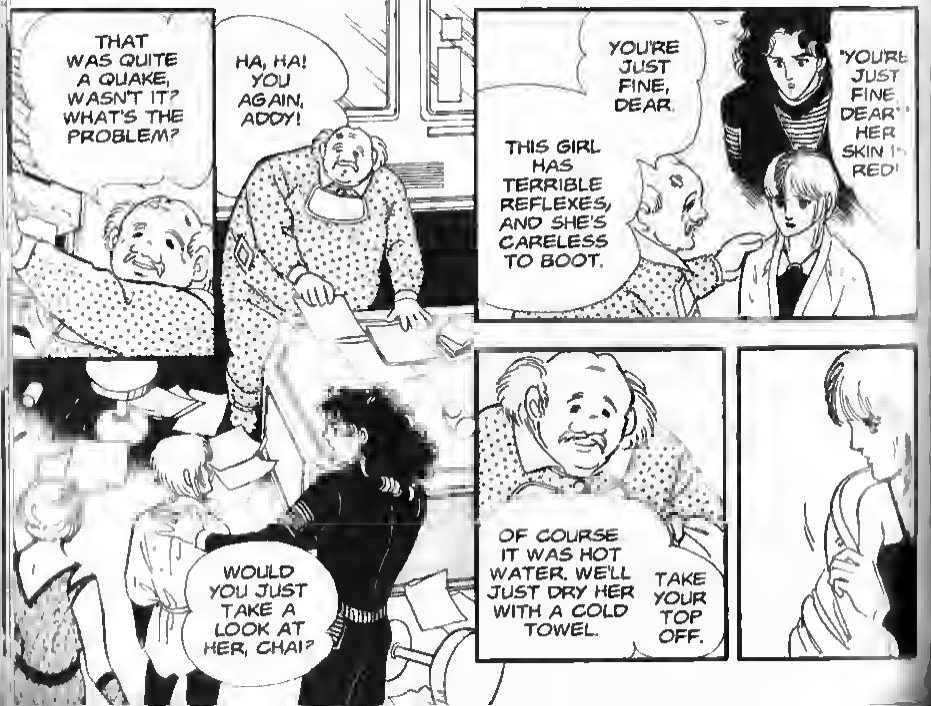

BEE
BEE
BEE
BEE!

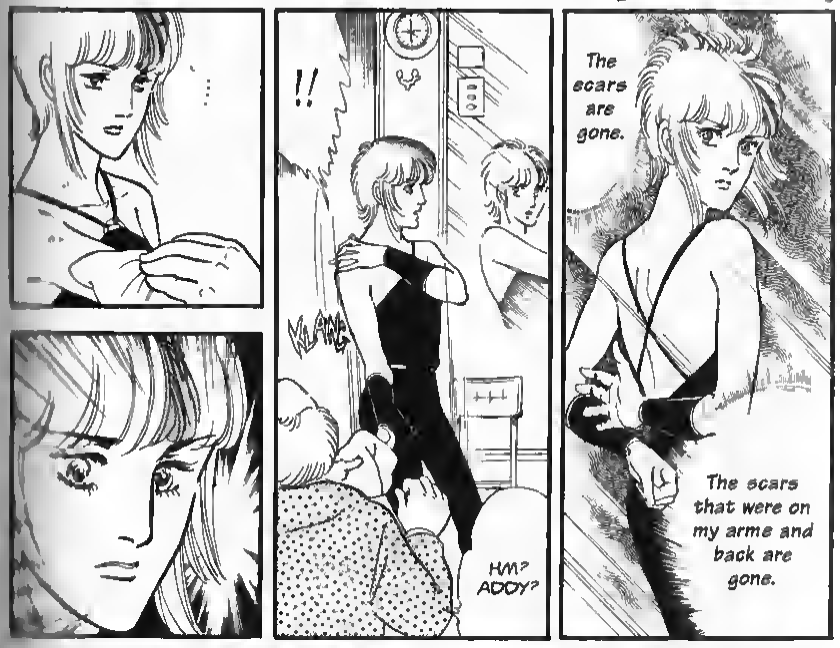

THE EPICENTER MUST BE RIGHT BELOW US!
DOWN ON THE FLOOR!
D-D-OOSH!!
KLATTER!


KSH-H!
KLANG


RMBL
RMBL
RMBL
KLATTER


IS IT OVER?
PHEW
I THINK THAT WAS THE STRONGEST EARTHQUAKE WE'VE HAD YET.
IS EVERY-ONE ALL RIGHT?
ADELADE, YOU HEARD THE GROUND RUMBLING, DIDN'T YOU?
HEY! YOU'RE COVERED WITH HOT WATER!
I'M FINE.
COME TO THE INFIRMARY WITH ME, ADDY!
THAT'S RIGHT! THE UNICORNS' RANGE OF SIGHT AND HEARING IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM OURS!
NOW YOU REMEM BER!


THAT WAS QUITE A QUAKE, WASN'T IT? WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
HA, HA! YOU AGAIN, ADDY!
WOULD YOU JUST TAKE A LOOK AT HER, CHAI?
YOU'RE JUST FINE, DEAR.
THIS GIRL HAS TERRIBLE REFLEXES, AND SHE'S CARELESS TO BOOT.
"YOU'RE JUST FINE, DEAR." HER SKIN IS RED!
OF COURSE IT WAS HOT WATER. WE'LL JUST DRY HER WITH A COLD TOWEL.
TAKE YOUR TOP OFF.


!!
KLANG
HM? ADDY?
The scars are gone.
The scars that were on my arms and back are gone.


WHAT IS IT, ADDY? IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR BACK?
!!
THERE'S NOTHING THERE, DEAR
AND AGAIN
ADE-LADE, YOUR SCARS . . .
ANY SCARS YOU RECEIVED AFTER BIRTH AREN'T IN YOUR GENETIC INFORMATION, OF COURSE.
THEY ARE . . .
TMP
. . .


ADELADE!
TMP
WHAT IS IT?
I DON'T KNOW
Now I see.
So this is what it means to be re-juvenated.
There isn't a single scar left on my body.
There's nothing left at all.
You say she's from a village in the Rocklee?
She's a 'unicorn.' Extramely rare.
She'll be left with some scars, but we've got to try to save her.
Pony... Where's Pony?
Pony? The pony died. It's a miracle you survived.
Died...? Why? Why?
Why...?


A, A′ [A, A Prime]
I... I lost both my parents when I was very young.
The village headman took me in.
I was always alone.
But I became friends with the shaggy-haired pony that used to come to graze in the nearby fields.
Pony was my only friend.
But... when I was eleven...
...we fell into a crevice, and Pony died.
These are scars from that accident.
I TOUCHED THAT ADDY'S HAIR.
I KISSED THAT ADDY'S SCARS.
THOSE SCARS ARE GONE.



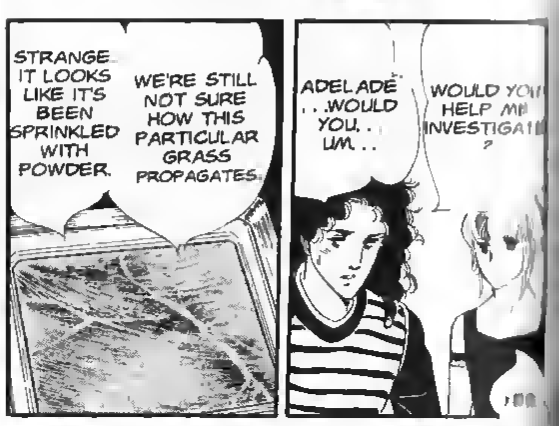


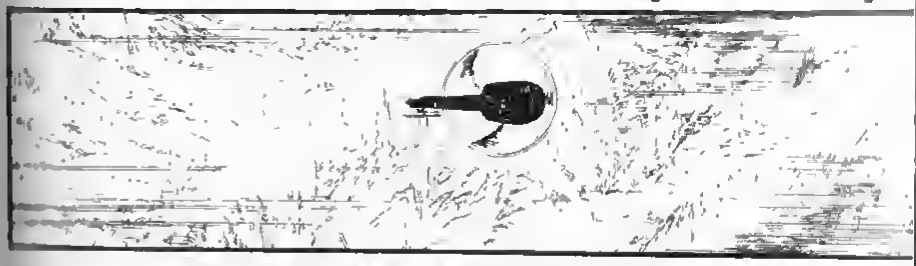
No, she isn't Adelade.

That's for sure.

But



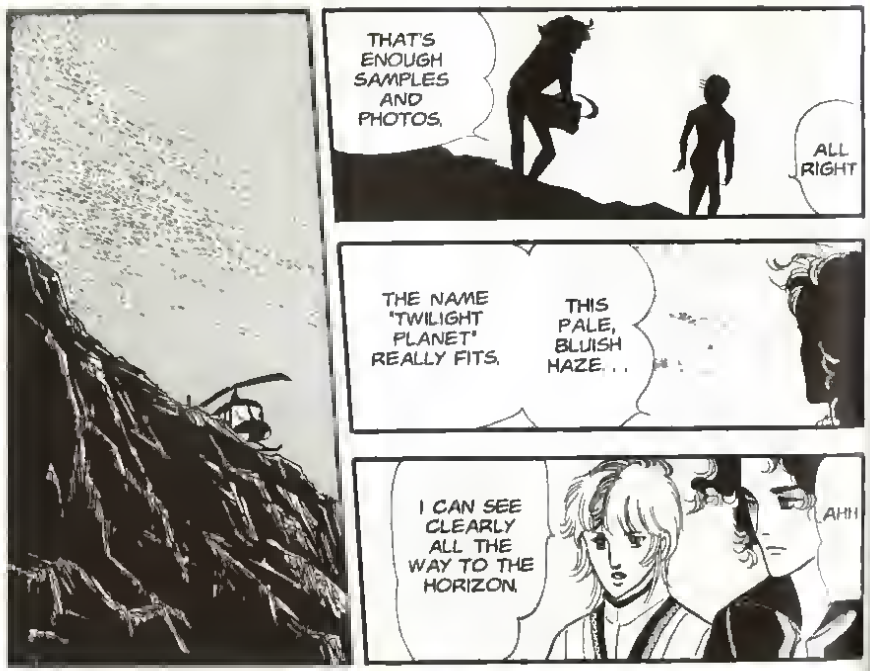




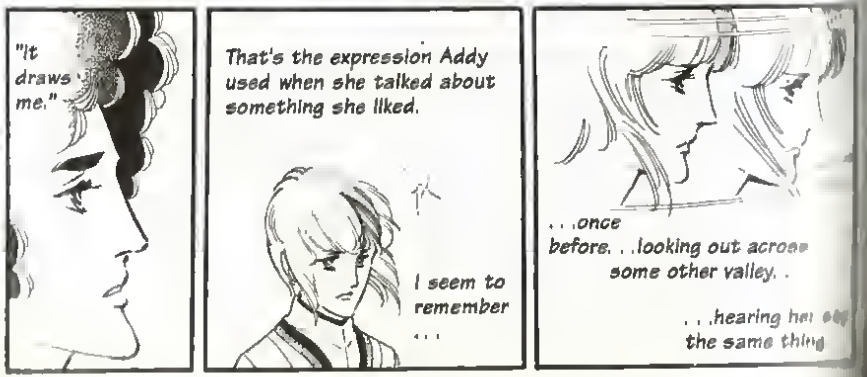




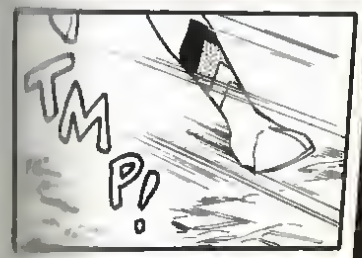



THAT'S ENOUGH SAMPLES AND PHOTOS.
ALL RIGHT
THE NAME 'TWILIGHT PLANET' REALLY FITS.
THIS PALE, BLUISH HAZE...
I CAN SEE CLEARLY ALL THE WAY TO THE HORIZON.
AHH!


To her eyes even the dimmest light seems bright. She can see even infrared radiation.
I NEVER GET TIRED OF LOOKING AT THIS LANDSCAPE.
IT DRAWS ME.


"It draws me."
That's the expression Addy used when she talked about something she liked.
I seem to remember . . .
. . .once before. . .looking out across some other valley. .
. . .hearing her say the same thing

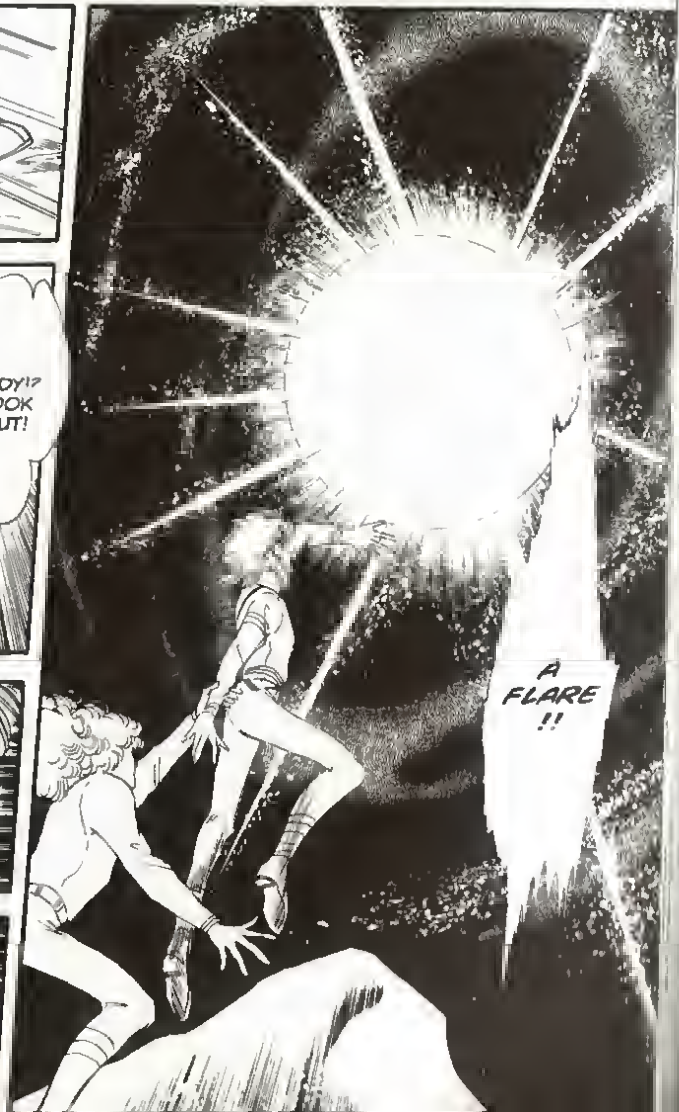

Ah!


TMP!


ADEL--
ADDY!? LOOK OUT!





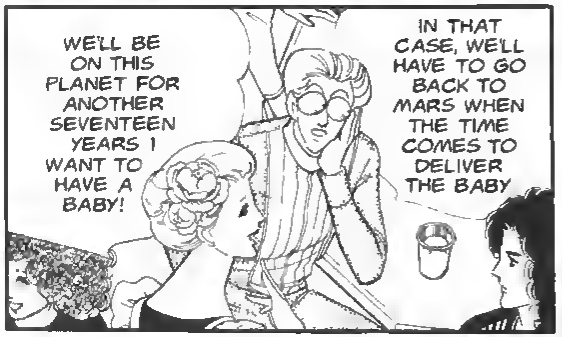

A FLARE !!


PROXIMA IS A VARIABLE STAR.
THE FLARES OF SUCH A DARK STAR ARE INVISIBLE TO OUR EYES.
BUT TO EYES THAT CAN PICK UP INFRARED RADIATION WITH A WAVE-LENGTH OF JUST TWO MICRONS. . . TO ADDY'S EYES . .
. HOW INTENSELY HOT AND BRIGHT THE ENERGY OF THIS SUN MUST APPEAR!!


YOU ARE CONFUSED.
YOU'RE ACTING STRANGELY.
ADDY. YOU TOLD ME THE STORY ABOUT PONY.
THOSE SCARS OF YOURS. . I ONCE KISSED THEM.
WE TALKED ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS
WE WE LOVED EACH OTHER.
YOU ARE CONFUSED.
I'VE NEVER TALKED WITH YOU ABOUT ANYTHING.
WE LOVED EACH OTHER I LOVE YOU
YOU ARE CONFUSED.
ADELADE
My red-maned unicorn. . .

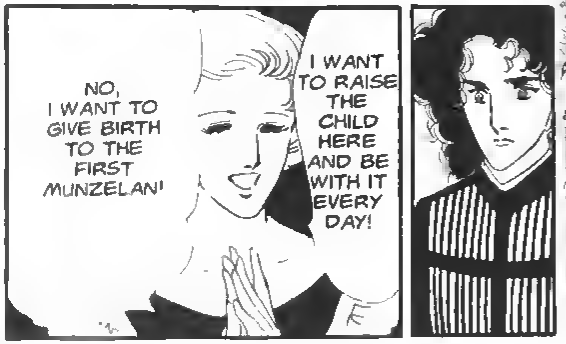


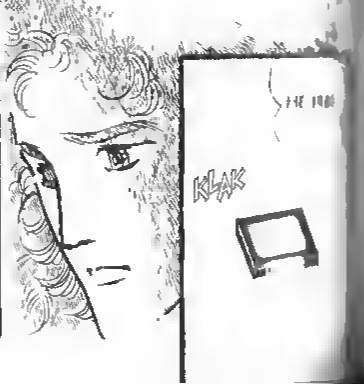




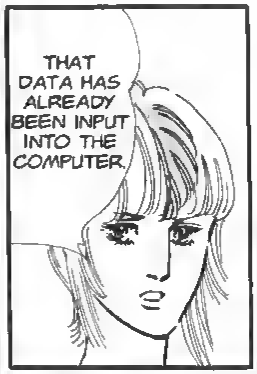
That's right. We have seventeen years ahead of us. There's no need to rush things.

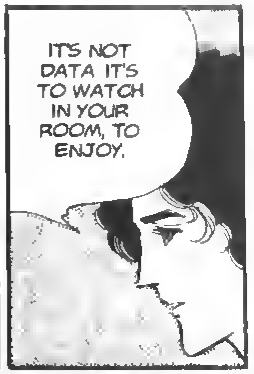
As far as Addy's concerned, I'm still a stranger.





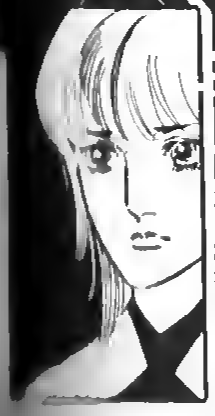










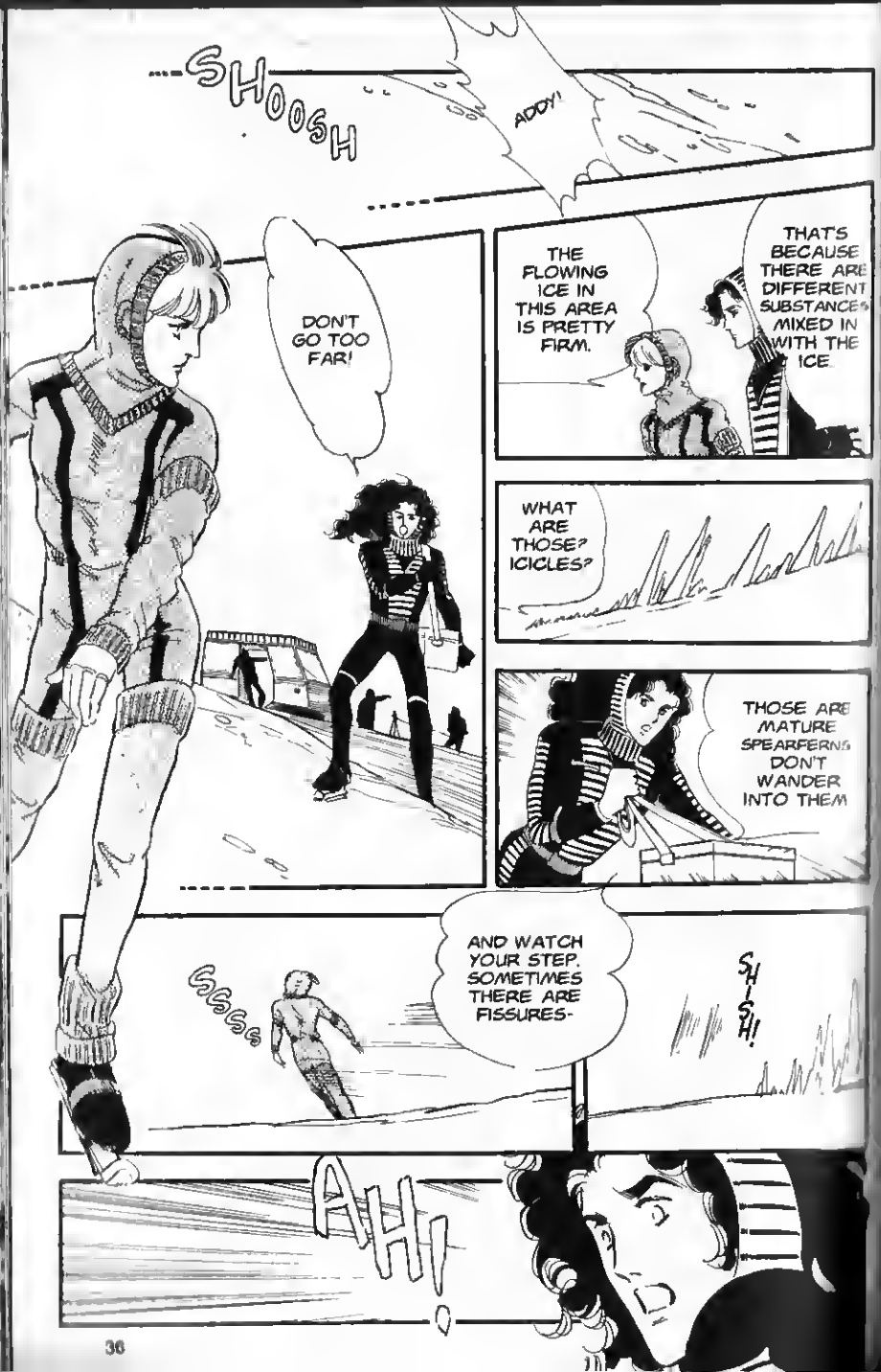


Why is he hallucinating this way?

The scars he says he has touched are nowhere on my body.

I've never once talked to anyone. . .

. . .about Pony.


SHOOSH
ADDY!
DON'T GO TOO FAR!
THE FLOWING ICE IN THIS AREA IS PRETTY FIRM.
THAT'S BECAUSE THERE ARE DIFFERENT SUBSTANCES MIXED IN WITH THE ICE.
WHAT ARE THOSE? ICICLES?
THOSE ARE MATURE SPEARFERNS DON'T WANDER INTO THEM
AND WATCH YOUR STEP. SOMETIMES THERE ARE FISSURES-
SSSSS
SHISH!
AH!


SSSSSSSS!
ADELADE!!
SHISH!
JUST KEEP SKATING! STAY STEADY!
MADAM! I WON'T LET HIM FALL OVER!!
THIS PLANET'S 0.77 GRAVITY IS OUR ONLY HOPE.
IF I CAN JUST OVER TAKE HER!


DON'T EASE UP!
GRADUALLY SHIFT YOUR WEIGHT OVER TOWARDS ME!
SHOOMP!
HFF HFF HFF
THROB
THROB THROB THROB
HFF HFF HFF HFF
UNH!!
YOU NEED OXYGEN.

A, A′ [A, A Prime]


SNAP
ARE YOU HURT?
NO.
THANKS. HERE'S YOUR OXYGEN.
I DON'T NEED AS MUCH AS YOU DO
FOOSHH
SU-U
WHAT'S WRONG?
THERE'S SOME THING HERE
ARE WE GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE?
THERE'S LIGHT COMING FROM THAT DIRECTION
?
THERE AREN'T ANY ANIMALS ON THIS PLANET NOT EVEN FISH


PROBABLY JUST A CONCEN-TRATION OF FERNS.
FASH
ADDY !!
!!
SHE SEEMS TO BE PERFECTLY PRESERVED.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HER HEAD HAS BEEN PIERCED BY A SPEAR-FERN.
She's been here ...
She's been here, all along ...
ADE LADE LEE
You...
...are Addy.
ADDY
My...
ADDY
My red-maned unicorn.
Addy!


FADE
I WANT A TRANSFER
ANYWHERE, ANY OTHER PLANET
REGG!
DON'T SAY THAT, REGG! YOU'RE IRREPLACEABLE!
I UNDERSTAND IT WAS A SHOCK TO FIND ADDY IN THAT VALLEY
BUT
...THERE WAS NOTHING WE COULD HAVE DONE...
WHA!?
FORGET ABOUT DOING ANYTHING! IN TIME IT'LL ALL BE COMPLETELY BURIED IN ICE!!
BUT- I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE HERE!


SHUT, [illegible]
IF YOU [illegible]
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ADELADE?
ADELADE!?
ADDY DIED.
SO WHY
WHY IS SHE HERE!?
REGG...
A CLONE IS NOTHING BUT A MONSTER!
WHY DON'T THEY LET ADDY REST IN PEACE!?
WHY...
WHY HAS SHE COME BACK FROM THE DEAD IN HER ORIGINAL FORM!?
ALPHA!
REGG IS LEAVING FOR TORIMAN!
TORIMAN?
THAT'S IN THE ALPHA CENTAURI SYSTEM, ISN'T IT? POINT SIXTEEN LIGHT YEARS FROM HERE?
AREN'T YOU GOING TO STOP HIM? HE MIGHT LISTEN TO YOU
STOP HIM, ADDY! I MEAN, REGG IS YOUR-
...
No.


Regg found...
They were reunited...
...at the bottom of that valley.
...his Adelade Lee.
WHERE ON TORI-MAN?
COL ONY A.
ADDY IS SO COLD
SHE DIDN'T EVEN TR TO STOP HIM
DON'T WORRY
WE'LL BE ABLE TO BRING HIM BACK HERE IN ANOTHER SIX MONTHS OR A YEAR
RIGHT NOW HE NEEDS TIME TO COOL OFF
It's a video of snowgrass.
Watch it whenever you like.
There probably isn't any snowgrass on Toriman.
The plant-life data is still incomplete.
I wonder how bright Toriman's sun is


BAM
A REPORT JUST CAME IN! TORIMAN'S SPACE COLONY A
WAS DESTROYED IN AN EXPLOSION!
TWP!
WHA!?
WHAT ABOUT REGG!?
HE WAS ON A
REGG AND THREE OTHERS
WERE KILLED IN THE EXPLOSION
...!
I wonder how bright the explosion was.


UNH. . .
WHAT IS IT, ADELADE?
HM?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT DO I MEAN?
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SET FOOT IN THE CAFETERIA!?
EH?
IT SEEMS ADELADE IS ILL AGAIN
AGAIN?
YES, SHE HASN'T EATEN SINCE WORD CAME ABOUT REGG AND THE EXPLOSION.
HOW ARE YOU ADELADE?
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ME. I'VE GOT WORK TO DO
ARE YOU FEELING NAUSEOUS?
A BIT. BUT-
HELLO, JENNY.
NOW LISTEN TO ME, CHILD WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THE 'UNICORNS,' WHO WERE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED EXPRESSLY FOR SPACE TRAVEL, NEVER BUILT AN EMPIRE AROUND SATURN?
THE PROBLEM WAS NAUSEA!


THEY HAD BREAD, BUT THEY STOPPED EATING BECAUSE OF NAUSEA, CONTINUED TO WORK LIKE ANTS, AND DIED OFF ONE BY ONE OF STARVATION.
YOUR SPECIES IS PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO STRESS-RELATED ANOREXIA TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THEY HAVE POOR REFLEXES AND ARE CARELESS.
QUITE A NUISANCE, REALLY.
YOU BECAME SICK ONCE BEFORE
THREE YEARS AGO.
YOU WERE A PUZZLE TO ALL OF US.
THAT MONOTONE VOICE OF YOURS. . .YOU WERE LIKE A DOLL THAT NEVER CRIED, LAUGHED, OR BECAME ANGRY
WE DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO APPROACH YOU.
SO WE BEGAN TO JUST IGNORE YOU
AND YOU IGNORED US.
AND THEN REGG NOTICED· YOU HADN'T EATEN A THING IN FIFTEEN DAYS!
I WERE [illegible] IN YOUR OWN WAY, AND YOU HAD FEELINGS.
IT'S JUST THAT THE WAY YOU EXPRESSED THEM WAS DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY PEOPLE. YOU DIDN'T CRY OR LAUGH THE WAY PEOPLE NORMALLY DO . .
SO WE HAD TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING YOU
BUT REGG SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND
UNTIL YOU BECAME SICK AFTER THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED REGG, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FELT.
I MEAN, YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO STOP REGG FROM GOING TO TORIMAN!


ADDY REGG IS COMING BACK.
THE ACCIDENT RATE IN FIRST-STAGE SPACE EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT IS MORE THAN FIFTY PERCENT.
THAT'S WHY PARTICIPANTS ARE GIVEN FIRST PRIORITY TO BE REJUVENATED AS CLONES.
THE WAY YOU WERE.
IT'S TRUE
YOU SHOULD KNOW WHY
THAT'S RIGHT! THERE'S A NEW REGG BACK ON EARTH
HE MAY EVEN BE AWAKE BY NOW!
OF COURSE, HE'S THE REGG HE WAS BEFORE COMING TO PROXIMA.
THE REGG BONE OF THREE AND A HALF YEARS AGO, SEVENTEEN OR EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD.
WHEN HE COMES BACK.
..WE'LL ALL BE NEW FACES TO HIM.
. BUT WE'LL BECOME GOOD FRIENDS IN NO TIME.
REGG IS COMING BACK, ADDY.
...

A, A′ [A, A Prime]


BUT ...
MAYBE YOU CAN LOVE ME TOMORROW.
WE CAN BEGIN TO BUILD NEW MEMORIES TOMORROW
The things reflected in your eyes. . .what your eyes see. . .
When I'm with you, I absorb all this as if by osmosis.
. . .toward an infinitely distant horizon.
I. . .
. . .love you, Adalade.


The container has been released from the interstellar mother ship and has entered Munzel's orbit.
Two hours to arrival.
OVER THIS WAY!
WHAT A BLIZ-ZARD!
I'M DASH, DIRECTOR OF THE OUTPOST.
WELCOME! WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
I'M REGG BONE
PLEA TO MEE YOU
F M P


A, A′ [A, A Prime]
ADDY . . .?
I want to tell this person about Pony.
I've been waiting for so, so long.
There are stories I want to tell. . .
. . .to you alone.

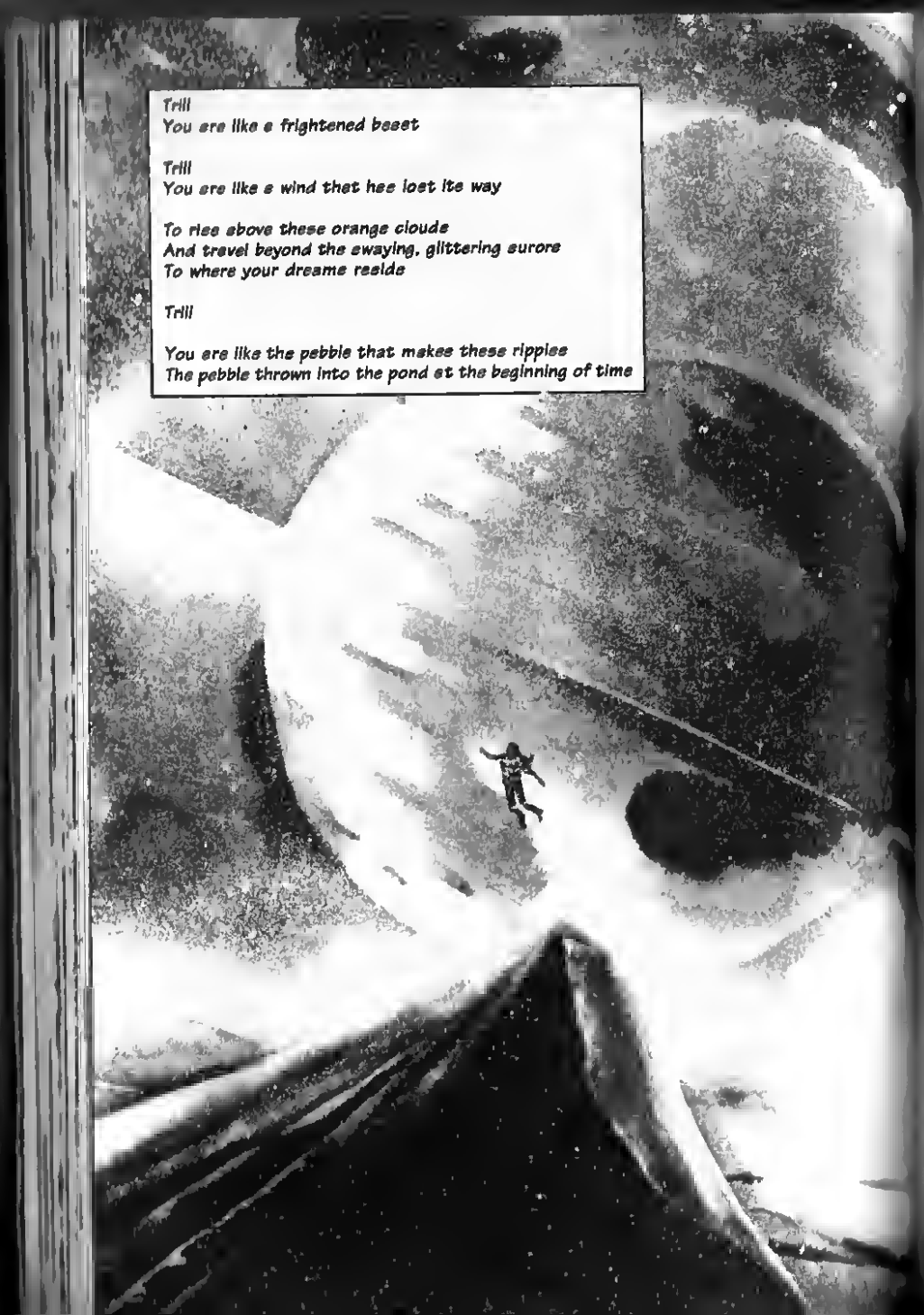




CHAPTER 2

4/4

[Quatre-Quarts]


Trill
You are like a frightened beast
Trill
You are like a wind that has lost its way
To rise above these orange clouds
And travel beyond the swaying, glittering aurora
To where your dreams reside
Trill
You are like the pebble that makes these ripples
The pebble thrown into the pond at the beginning of time

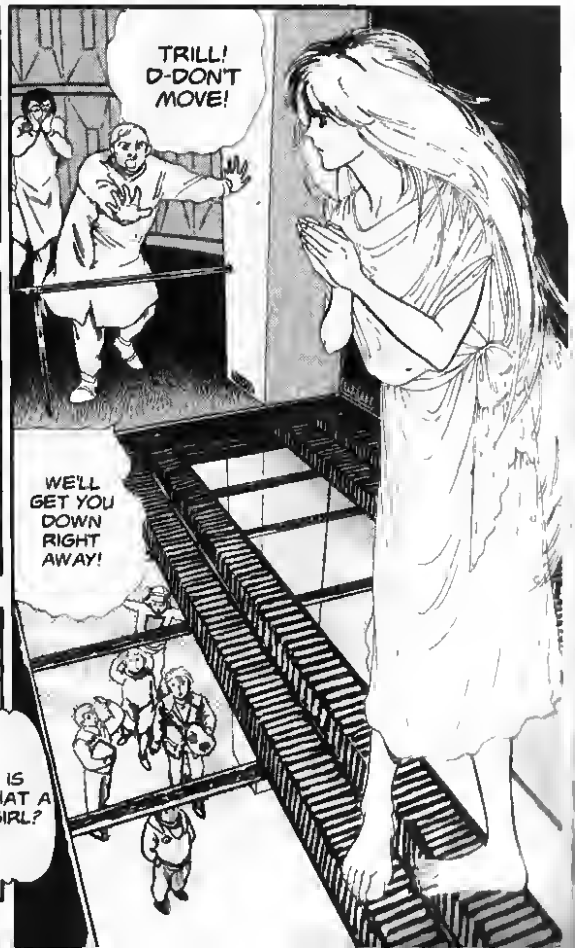

I COMPLETELY BLEW THAT TEST.
YOU BLOW *EVERY* TEST, MORI


YOU MAY AS WELL CALL IT QUITS AND ROLL OVER AND DIE RIGHT NOW
WATCH IT.


HEY.




IS THAT A GIRL?


TRILL! D-DON'T MOVE!
WE'LL GET YOU DOWN RIGHT AWAY!


TWEE TWEE ...
TWEE TWEE chirp
TRILL!
WAH!
WHOO
...
TWEE TWEE


TRILL! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?
SLUMP
AHHHH!
FAPP
I SEE. YOUR BIRD FLEW AWAY, DID IT?
LET'S GO HOME TO THE GARDEN NOW.
YOU MUSTN'T GO OUT ALONE AGAIN, TRILL.
TWEE TWEE
HOW COULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN, KEIKO!?
I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR.
I JUST LET HER OUT OF MY SIGHT FOR A MOMENT, AND . .
WHO'S THAT?
...BEATS ME.
HEY! WAS THAT YOUR TELEKINESIS, MORI!?
WHAT!? HOW DID THAT!?
THE GRAVITY ON THIS PLANET MAY BE WEAK. .
. .BUT TO STOP A HUMAN BODY IN MIDAIR!? WOW!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THAT WAS INCREDIBLE, MORI!


A poltergeist lives in my room.
It pushes everything in the room towards the window that looks out on Jupiter.
That poltergeist is me. My latent power. It does this when I'm asleep.
I still can't control my power...
...even after eight years here on Io.
But that girl who came flying down like a bird today...
...was so light.
I wonder who she is?
"Trill"... I think he called her "Trill"


MOM!
PROFESSOR SAZZAN ASKED ME TO TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL HE IS...
...FOR SAVING HIS DAUGHTER.
I train here with twenty-ons other kids who have special powers...
...under the direction of Msme Mis, an ornithologist who is also a telepath.
HOW'D YOU DO THAT? YOU CAN'T EVEN MOVE AN ASHTRAY!
Poke
Poke
Poke
YOU LITTLE...
YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT, SO IT MUST HAVE JUST BEEN LUCK
MMM
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT SAVING A GIRL?
MOM! DID!?
NO WAY!
THAT GIRL WAS KIND OF WEIRD, WASN'T SHE? SHE HAS A STRIP OF RED HAIR, LIKE SOME KIND OF MANE.
WHO IS THAT, MOM?
OH, IT WAS THAT GIRL!? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT HER?
SNAPP KRAK
THEY SAY THE NEW PROFESSOR IN B-23 KEEPS ONE OF THOSE RARE "UNICORNS" AS A PET!
THEY SAY SHE HAS A RED MANE.
NO THAT GIRL IS THE SUBJECT IN AN EXPERIMENT?
WOW.
"One of those rare Unicorns"...?


MORI, WOULD YOU TAKE THIS TO PROFESSOR SAZZAN FOR ME?
HE ASKED FOR A BIRD THAT DOESN'T FLY.
QUACK
PINK DUCK
MOM, WHAT'S A "UNICORN" ?
A BIO-ENGINEERED RACE OF PEOPLE CREATED MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, AROUND THE TIME OF THE NUCLEAR WARS.
IN THOSE DAYS, THEY BIOENGINEERED HUMANS THE WAY I BIO-ENGINEER BIRDS.
THERE YOU GO, DEAR.
THAT GIRL'S A DESCENDANT OF THAT RACE. A PURE-BLOODED UNICORN. LIKE HER IS EXTREMELY RARE THESE DAYS
This is lo'e first research city.
The people who come here are all researchers or their subjects.
My classmates and I are all subjects in experiments on preternatural powers
But what kind of experiment. . .
. . .would a Unicorn be used in?
HELLO.
OH, YOU'VE BROUGHT US OUR DUCK.
THE PROFESSOR'S IN THE GARDEN, OVER THAT WAY
I'll THANK

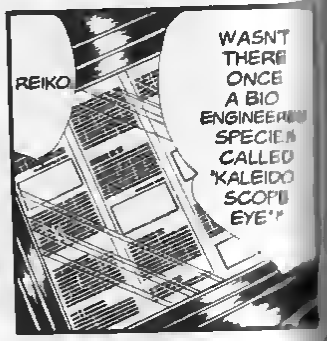

TIME TO PUT YOUR CLOTHES ON, TRILL. YOUR SUNBATHING TIME IS OVER.
PEEP
TRILL! WHAT IS IT?
TWEE TWEE!


WAH!
WHUMP
OH, IT'S YOU!
PROFESSOR MIA'S SUBJECT..
..MORI, WAS IT?
BLOOD...
PEEP! TWEE TWEE
SHE'S HURT
PINK BIRD
THIS HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.
ONCE SHE STARTS RUNNING, SHE DOESN'T STOP. SHE'S SO CLUMSY
COULD YOU HAND ME THAT FIRST-AID KIT?
SURE.
...
THANKS TELEKINESIS CERTAINLY IS CONVENIENT, ISN'T IT?
it's happening again.
PINK QUACK
GWAHK
I'm controlling my telekinesis perfectly.
I wonder that could something do with this


I CAME ACROSS HER QUITE BY ACCIDENT IN A NURSING HOME ON EARTH.
SHE WAS SEVEN AT THE TIME, BUT COULDN'T EVEN WALK. SHE HAD TERRIBLE NEUROSES.
HM?
YOU MEAN SHE'S NOT YOUR DAUGHTER?
SHE'S MY ADOPTED DAUGHTER.
THIS RACE IS POORLY ADAPTED TO OUR ENVIRONMENT. THEY TEND TO HAVE A SHORT LIFESPAN
THEY HAVE TO BE RAISED WITH GREAT CARE.
HER PARENTS APPARENTLY DIED AT A YOUNG AGE
JUST LOOK AT THIS MANE. NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT, HAVE YOU?
TWINKLE.
HUH?
WHAT'S THAT? IF ONLY SHE COULD SPEAK A BIT MORE
THERE'S A RED AURORA UP THAT WAY.
A RED AURORA





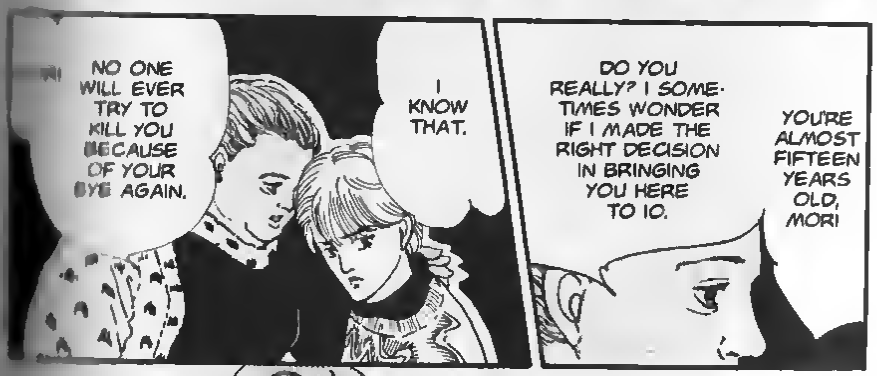


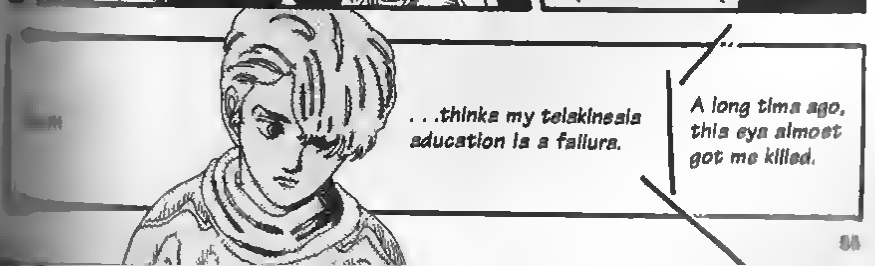


Damn.

And I almost forgot about my eye since I came to Io.







I was kidnapped by a fanatical cult in a mountain village on Earth and nearly sacrificed.

My eye changes colors like a spinning kaleidoscope. . .they said it was. . .

. . .an evil eye.

My fear triggered my telekinetic powers.

The temple collapsed, and there was a huge landslide.

I was five at the time.

I think I must have used up most of my telekinetic power that day.

I've never been able to produce that much power again.

Mom says I mustn't be afraid.

She says it's just a matter of control.

Sure, I'm afraid.

And I can't live up to Mom's expectations.

So all I've got is a poltergeist in my room.

. . .and an eye that can see infrared light.

She's got the same eyes.

It's strange.

I can really control my powers when I'm with Trill.

I wonder why.

PRETTY

She and I see the same things.

YEAH.

We see the same light.

I'M GLAD YOU CAME.

SHE LIKES WHEN I USE MY TELE-KINESIS.

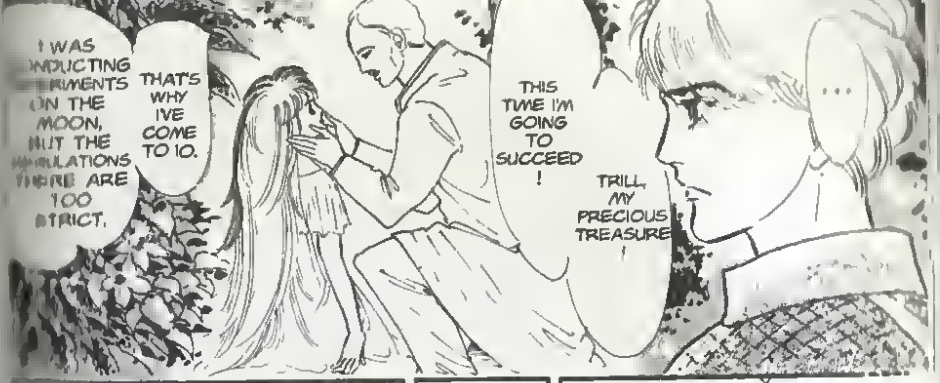
SHE WATCHES WITH A BIG SMILE ON HER FACE.

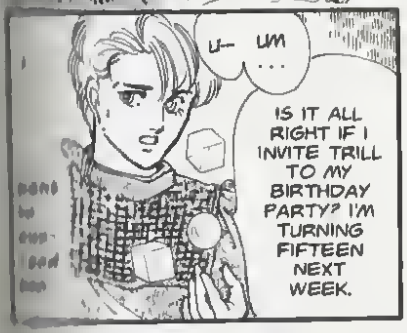
THAT CAN'T BE.

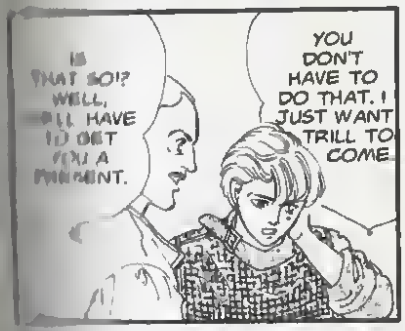
IT MUST BE YOUR IMAGINATION. UNICORNS HAVE NO EMOTIONS.

!



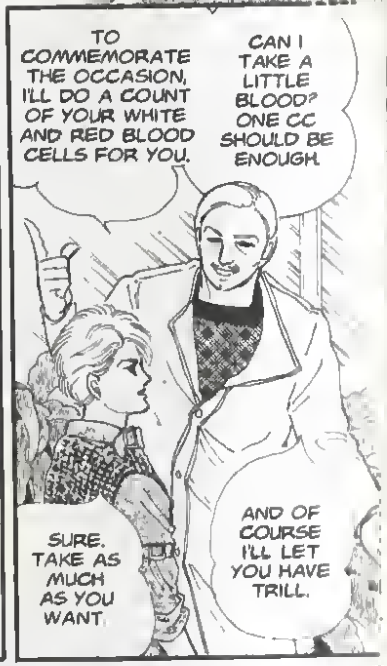




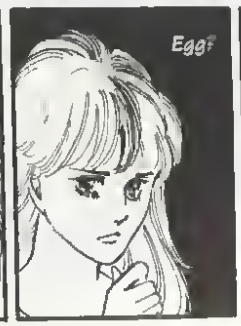


When Trill shows up...

...I'll give Mom the surprise of her life.










POP
POP
POP!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MORI!
LIFE IS INEVITABLY MADE UP OF CO-INCIDENCES, FATE, AND DESIRE!
HELLO, MORI! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
TRILL!
YOU KNOW, THE SUBJECT OF PROFESSOR SAZZAN'S EXPERI-MENTS.
WHO'S THAT?
OH, YEAH! SHE'S A REAL CUTIE
HMPH! THEY SAY SHE'S NOTHING BUT A DOLL.
I HEARD SHE CAN'T DO ANYTHING BY HER SELF
MORI, BLOW OUT THE CANDLES.
hee hee
BLOW THEM OUT! BLOW THEM OUT!
REMEMBER WHEN HE TRIED TO BLOW OUT THE CANDLES WITH TELEKINESIS LAST YEAR?
hee
hee
hee
YEAH, THAT WAS A SCREAM.

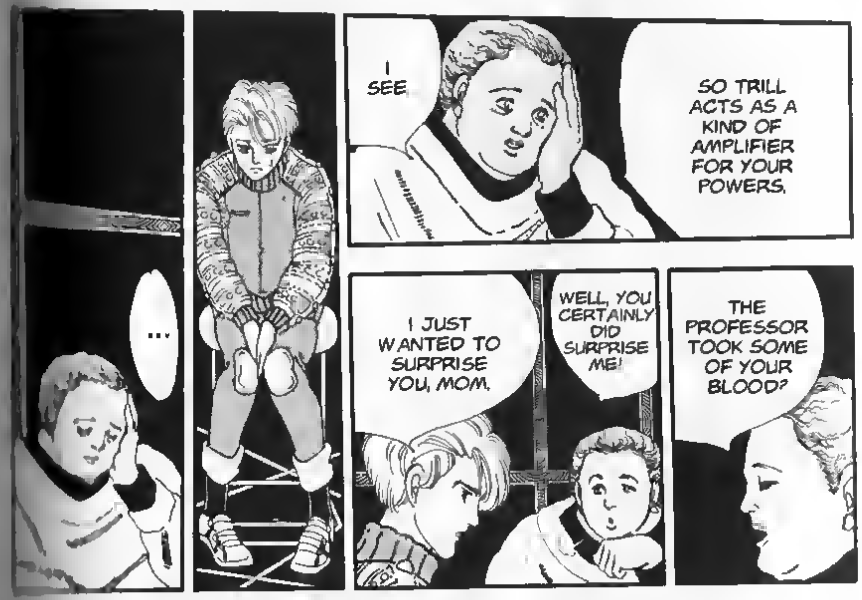

What's a pound cake made of?
One quarter flour, one quarter milk, one quarter butter, and one quarter sugar.
Put them together, spin them around, and scramble them up.
MORI!
I really have full-fledged powers now!
YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING IN SECRET, HAVEN'T YOU!?
THIS IS GREAT, MORI!


I HEARD THE REAL REASON PROFESSOR SAZZAN LIKES MORI...
...IS THAT HE WANTS TO DO AN EXPERIMENT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COMBINE A UNICORN AND A KALEIDOSCOPE EYE...

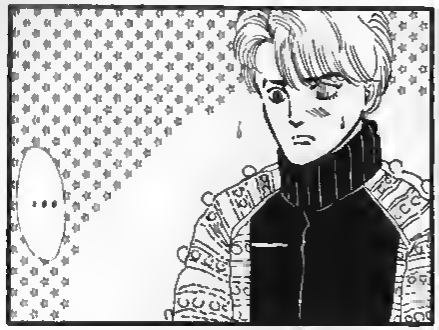

FWOOSH
KYAAHH!
WAH!!


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MORI!? STOP IT!
Oh no!
I've lost control of it!
TAKE TRILL OUTSIDE!!
HURRY!
TANU MOM AWAY!

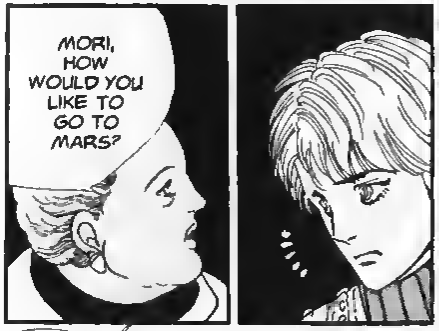

KRASSHH


...
I SEE.
SO TRILL ACTS AS A KIND OF AMPLIFIER FOR YOUR POWERS.
I JUST WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU, MOM.
WELL, YOU CERTAINLY DID SURPRISE ME!
THE PROFESSOR TOOK SOME OF YOUR BLOOD?


THAT WAS A NASTY TRICK!
I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS GOING TO USE IT IN AN EXPERIMENT! HE LIED TO ME!
THEN YOU'RE EVEN.
YOU BOTH USED TRILL
. FOR YOUR OWN ADVANTAGE


...

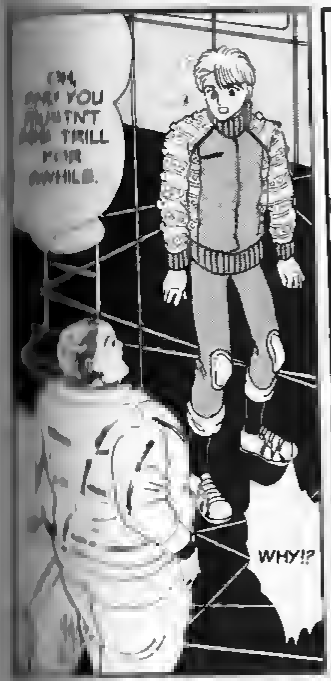

YOU REMEMBER DOCTOR MOROZOFF, DON'T YOU?
HE'S AT A UNIVERSITY ON MARS NOW.
YEAH.
HE'S INTERESTED IN YOUR POWERS, AND WOULD LIKE TO TRY TO TEACH YOU HOW TO CONTROL THEM.


MORI, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO TO MARS?


I DON'T WANT TO GO TO A PLACE...
...WHERE THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE AGAIN
IS THIS THE PERUVIAN BOY WITH SUPER POWERS?


FASH
FASH
FASH
KSH-H!
KSH-H!
POW!


MARS IS A NICE PLACE, TOO.
IF YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO CONTROL YOUR POWERS, YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING A NUISANCE TO OTHERS.
ON THE CONTRARY, YOU CAN BE USEFUL!
I'M SURE DOCTOR MOROZOFF WILL FIND A WAY
THINK ABOUT IT


OH, SORRY! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL YOUR BROTHER.
WHY!?


NO ONE WAS HURT AT THE PARTY...
...BUT THERE'S STILL A DANGER


...

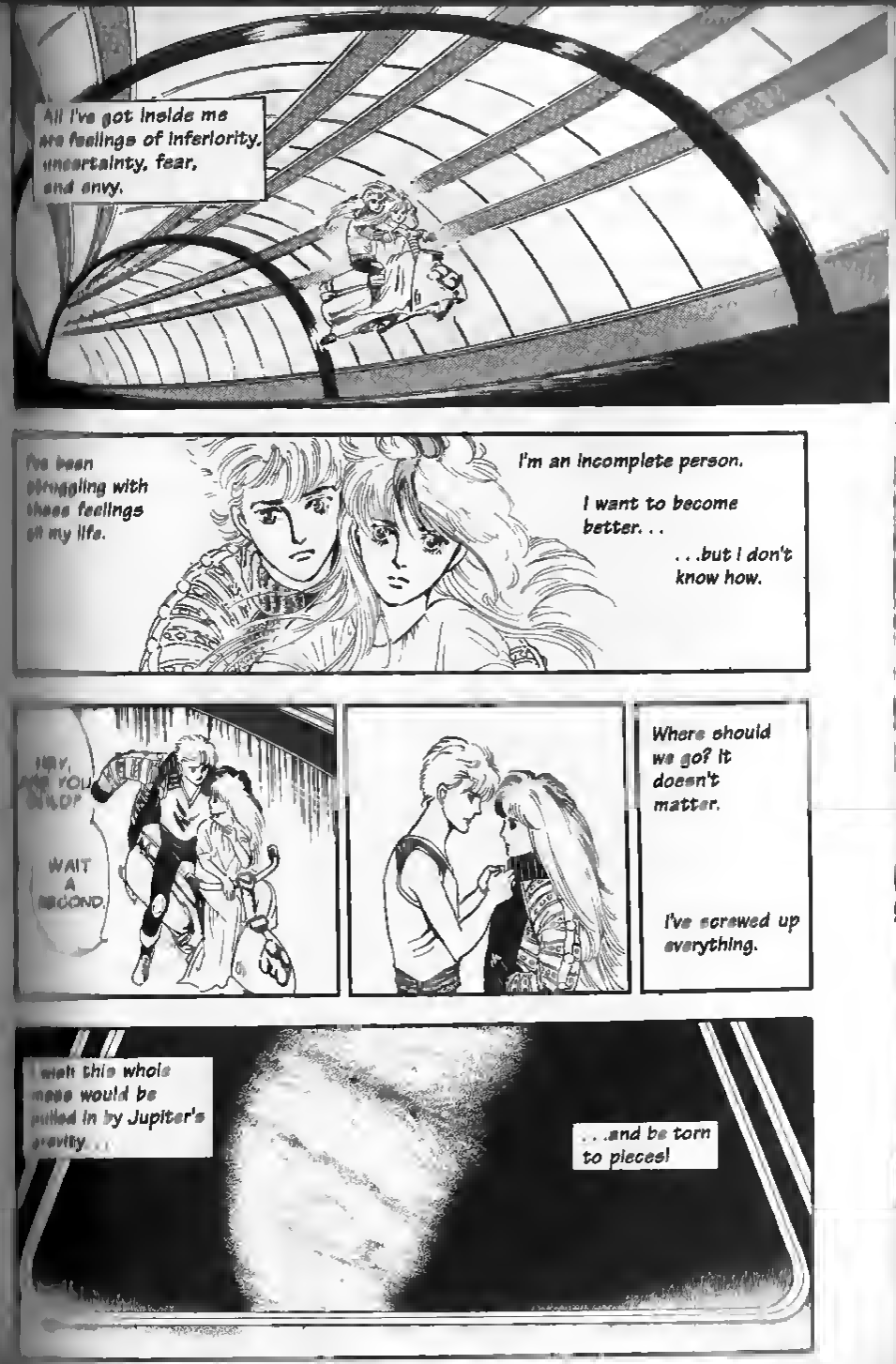

Mare!?
Hah! She just wants to get rid of me because I'm a failure.
And I'll be a failure on Mars, too.
I know if I just practice a bit more with Trill, I can make it work!

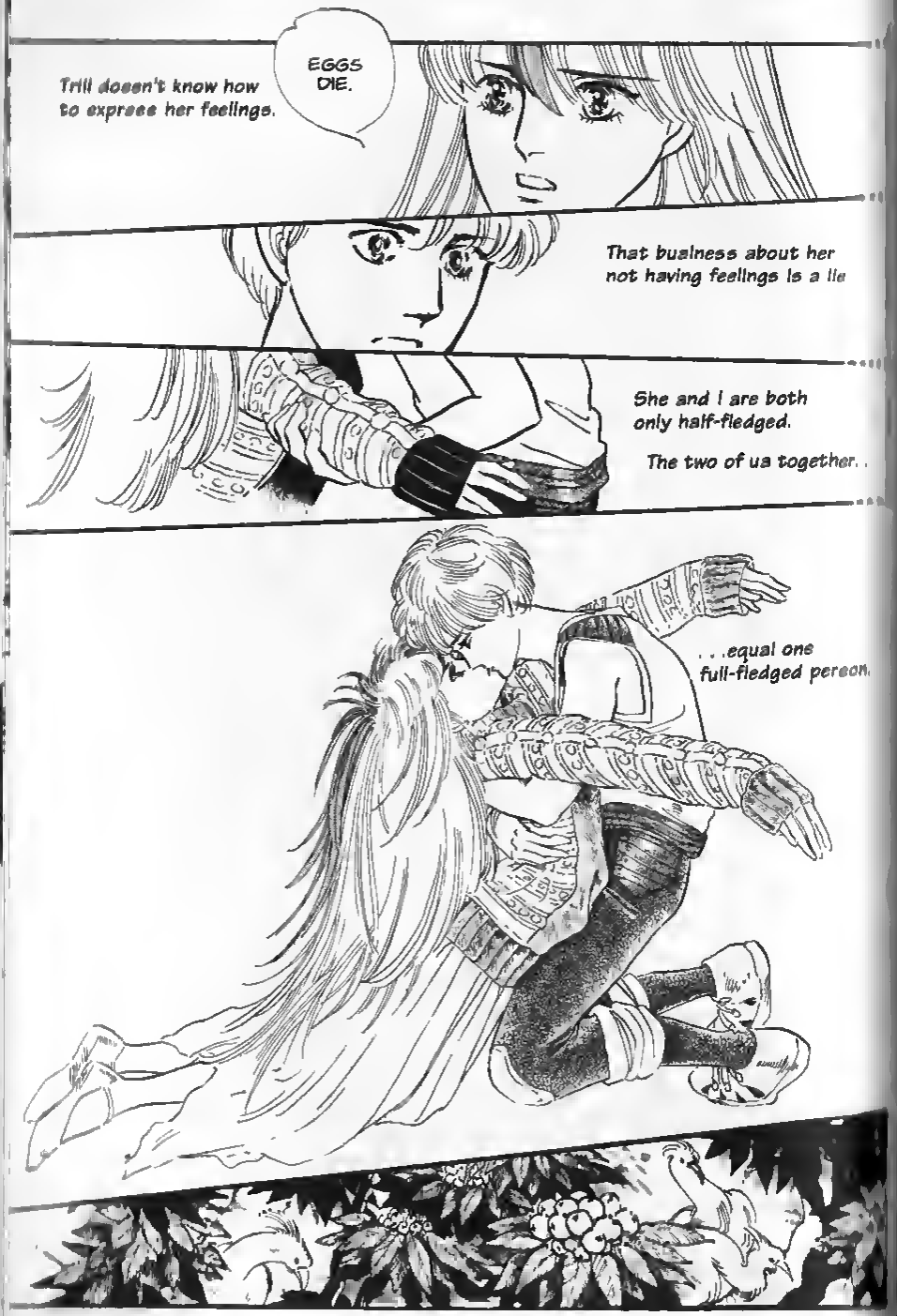

SHISH




!!
WELL, WELL


WHY, HELLO, MORI.
YESTER DAY'S PARTY CERTAINLY WAS SOMETHING, WASN'T IT?
NO, NO, TRILL.
MO-RI.
ACTUALLY, PROFESSOR MAMA MIA ASKED ME TO BE CAREFUL.
SHE TELLS ME YOU CAN USE YOUR PRETER NATURAL POWERS WHEN YOU'RE WITH TRILL
SO I'M AFRAID YOU CAN'T
IN OTHER WORDS, NOW THAT YOU'VE GOTTEN A SAMPLE OF MY BLOOD, YOU DON'T WANT ME AROUND ANY MORE?
NOW, MORI
IT'S SIMPLY THAT KALEIDO SCOPE EYES ARE SO RARE
VS
SH
H
PLA
SH
COME ON!
TRILL!
W-WAIT! GLUK!


All I've got inside me are feelings of inferiority, uncertainty, fear, and envy.
I've been struggling with these feelings all my life.
I'm an incomplete person.
I want to become better. . .
. . .but I don't know how.
HEY, WHERE YOU GOIN'?
WAIT A SECOND.
Where should we go? It doesn't matter.
I've screwed up everything.
I wish this whole mess would be pulled in by Jupiter's gravity. . .
. . .and be torn to pieces!


EGGS DIE.
Trill doesn't know how to express her feelings.
That business about her not having feelings is a lie
She and I are both only half-fledged.
The two of us together. . .
. . .equal one full-fledged person.


TRILL DO YOU LIKE ME?
TRILL LIKES MORI
WELL, WHAT ABOUT HIM? WHAT ABOUT PROFESSOR SAZZAN?
SOV
!
HOW CAN YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT ME AND THAT OLD JERK!?
YOU HATE THOSE EXPERIMENTS, DON'T YOU!?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING TO YOU!?
OH, I SEE!


YOUR IDEA OF LOVE IS JUST LIKE A BABY'S!
WELL, IF YOU LIKE YOUR PAPA SO MUCH, GO ON BACK TO HIM!
JTH
FWAPP
FWAPP
FWAPP
SHOOSH

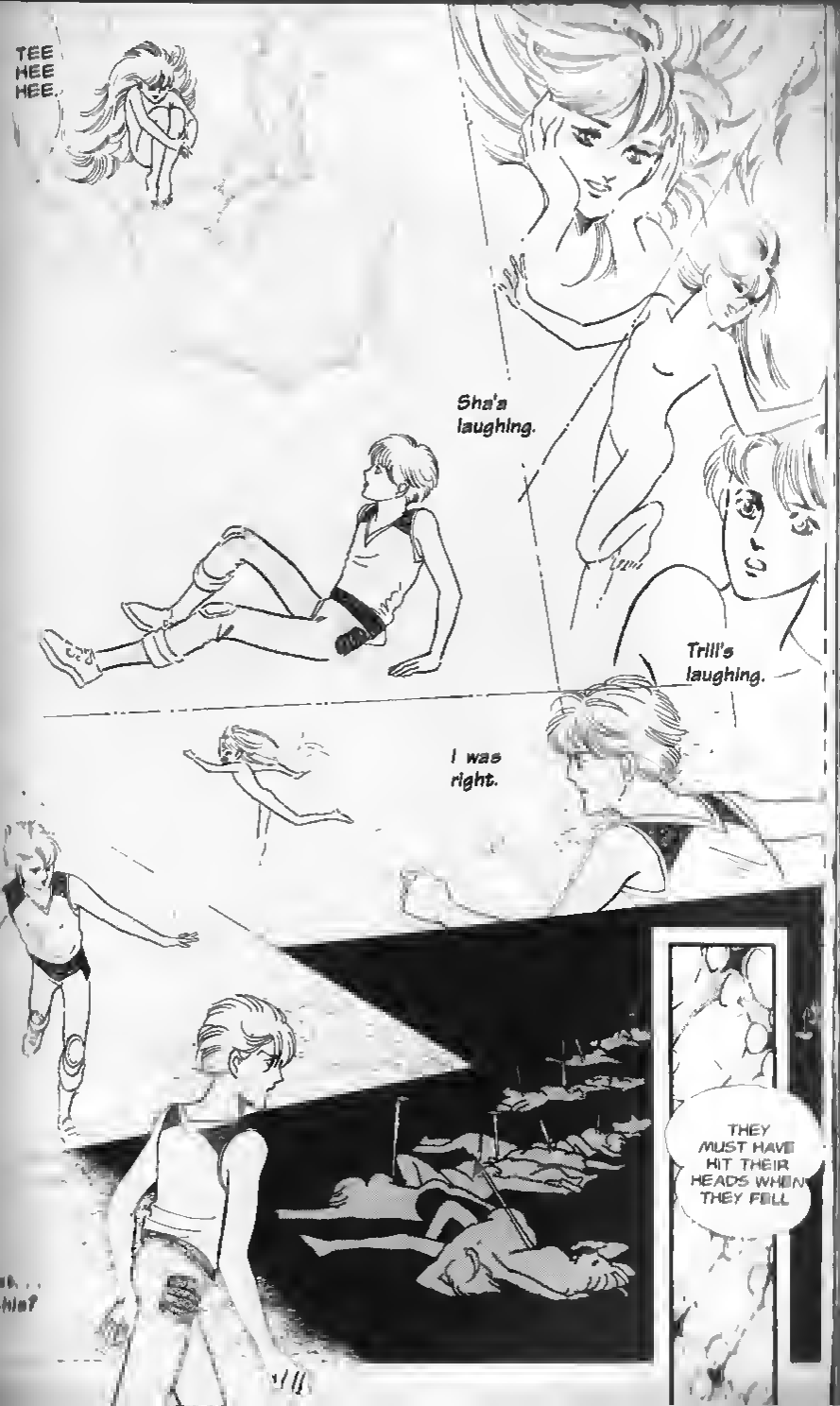

TRILL! WAIT!
WAIT!
FZZT
FAPP
KISHH!
POW!
Over-heating!?
I'm doing this!?
FZZT
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
It's because I'm with Trill.
It's just like Mom said.


I can't control it.
Let go of Trill!


LET GO OF TRILL!


MAMA MIA! THERE'S A FIRE IN BLOCK B-34!
WHAT!?
I CAN 'SEE' TRILL AND MORI INSIDE.
WHAT!? THAT KID NAPPER --!?
SOMB ONE SAVE MY TRILL!




TEE HEE HEE.
Sha'a laughing.
Trill's laughing.
I was right.
THEY MUST HAVE HIT THEIR HEADS WHEN THEY FELL
Whoa... is this?


THEY WERE NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE BLOCK
WAIT.
DON'T SEPARATE THEM.
THEY'RE RESON-ATING
RESON ATING
THEY ARE HAVING THE SAME DREAM
Corpses?
These corpses are all. . . Trill. . .?

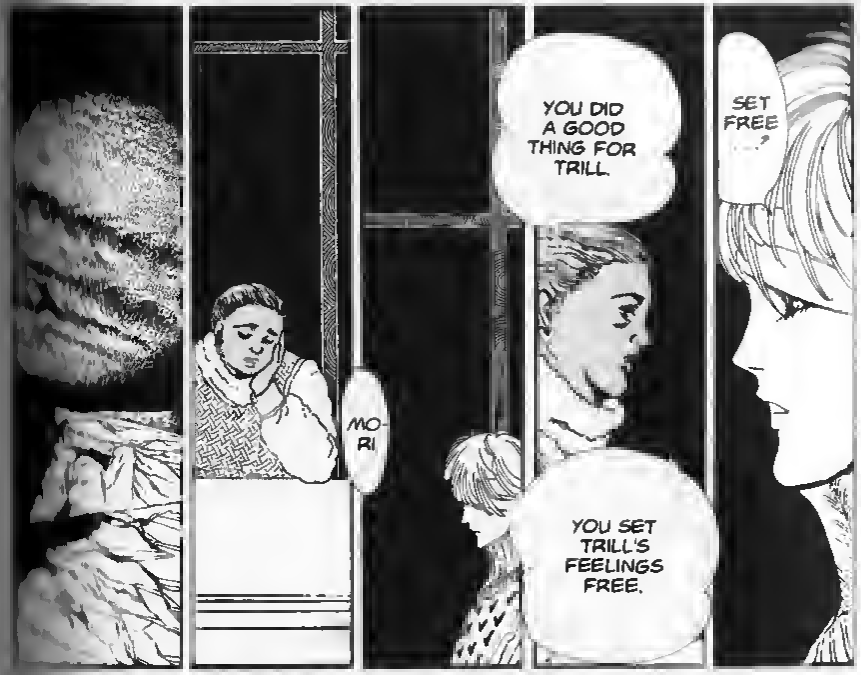

PIIIIII!
UHH


TRILL!
HFF
HFF
HFF
THEY'VE WOKEN UP
REMOVE THE PLATES


THANK GOODNESS! TRILL, I WAS SO WORRIED--
KYAH!!

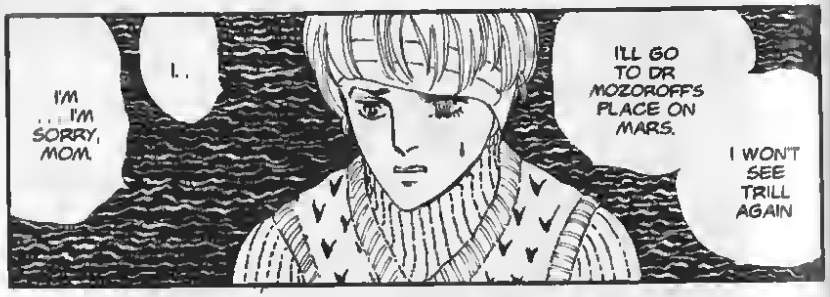

TRILL, IT'S PAPA!
WHAT'S WRONG?
A...
A...


NO!!


MO-RI
YOU DID A GOOD THING FOR TRILL.
YOU SET TRILL'S FEELINGS FREE.
SET FREE...?


SHE HAD NOTHINGS ALL ALONG
BUT SHE MUST HAVE LOCKED THEM AWAY WHEN SHE WAS VERY YOUNG.
SHE WANTED TO CRY AND LAUGH AND SHOW ANGER, BUT SHE DIDN'T KNOW HOW
BUT NOW THOSE FEELINGS HAVE BEEN SET FREE.
SHE'S A BIT DIS-TRESSED...
. BUT PROFESSOR SAZZAN IS WITH HER. SHE'LL BE FINE

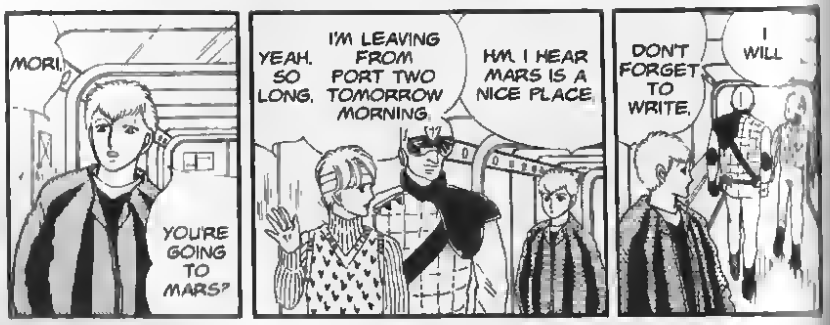

BUT HALF OF THE MARY WAS COMPLETELY BURNED UP
...
THE RESEARCH I LABORED OVER FOR EIGHT YEARS IS NOW NOTHING BUT BARBEQUE
I'M TOO OVER-WHELMED TO EVEN BE ANGRY
...

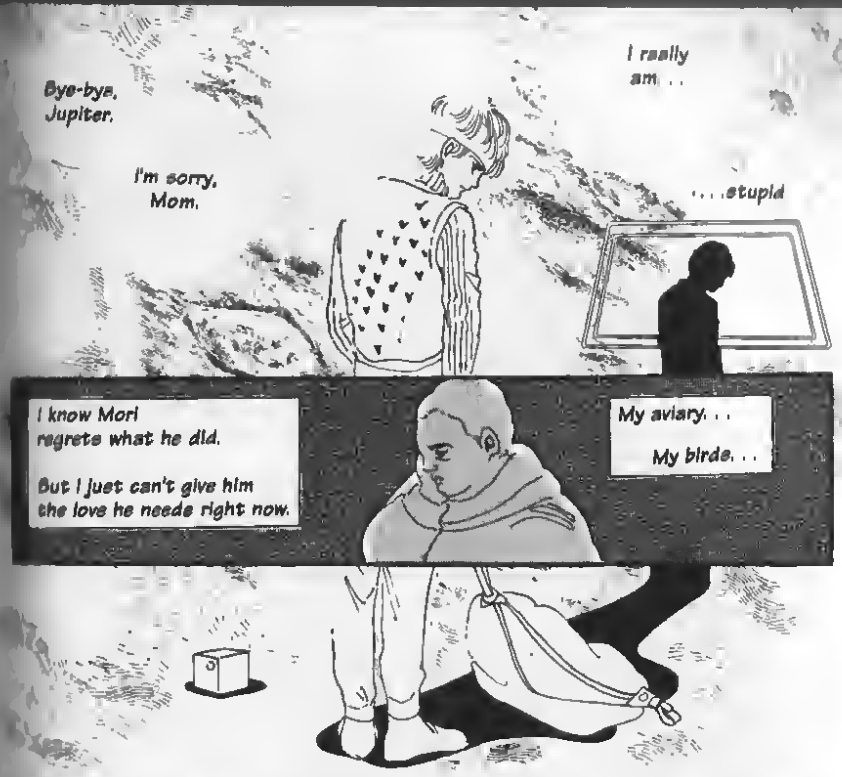

I'M . . . I'M SORRY, MOM.
I . .
I'LL GO TO DR MOZOROFF'S PLACE ON MARS.
I WON'T SEE TRILL AGAIN

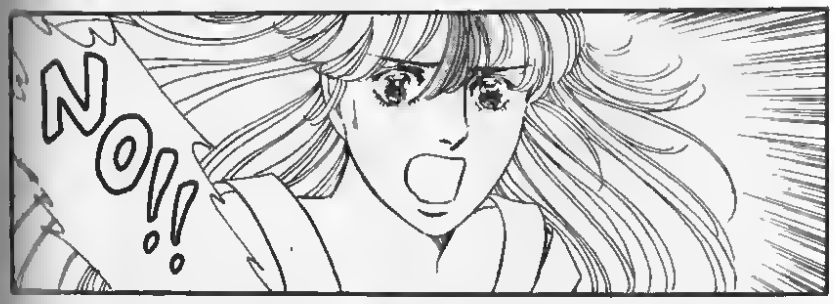

HM.
IF YOU CAN LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR POWER.
THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY HARM. . .
. . .IN COMING BACK TO IO AND BEING FRIENDS WITH TRILL.
THIS WAS PARTLY MY FAULT, TOO
I WASN'T ABLE TO GIVE YOU PROPER GUIDANCE


YOU TWO WERE RESONATING ALL ALONG

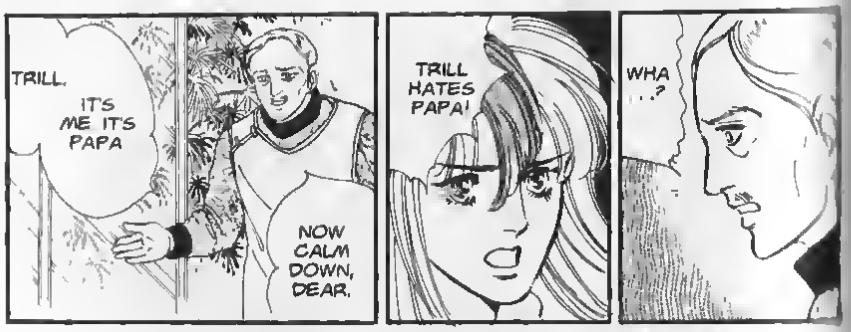

Resonating.


MORI.
YOU'RE GOING TO MARS?
YEAH. SO LONG.
I'M LEAVING FROM PORT TWO TOMORROW MORNING.
HM. I HEAR MARS IS A NICE PLACE.
DON'T FORGET TO WRITE.
I WILL


Bye-bye, Jupiter.
I'm sorry, Mom.
I really am. . .
. . . stupid
I know Mori regrets what he did.
But I just can't give him the love he needs right now.
My aviary. . .
My birds. . .

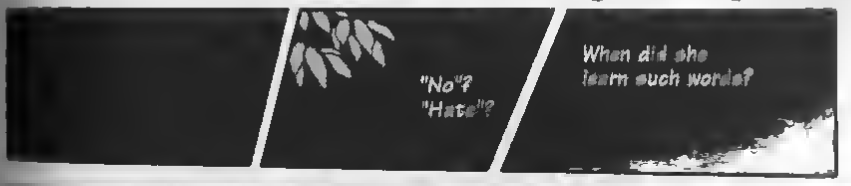

NO!!

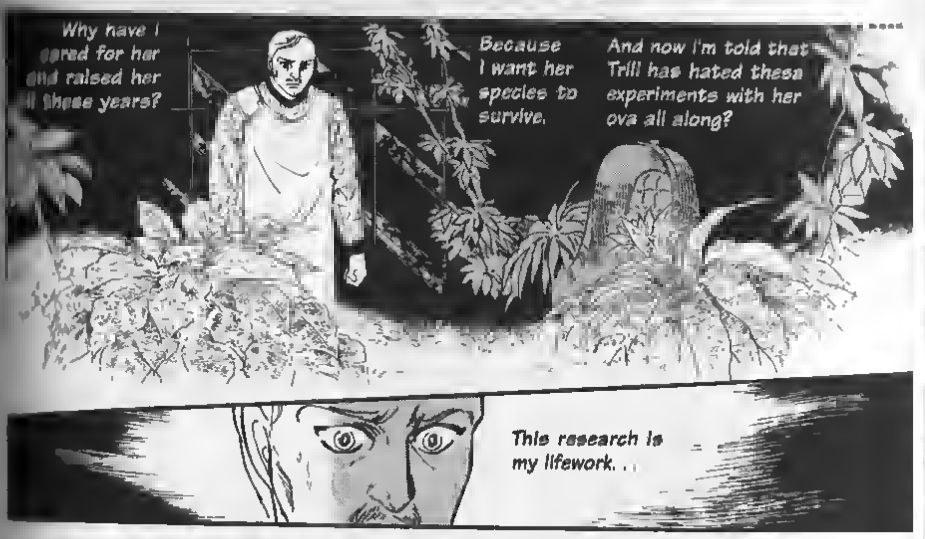

TRILL! OH MY. HER USUAL SLEEPING PILLS AREN'T WORKING.
MAMA MIA SAYS HER FEELINGS HAVE BEEN RELEASED, BUT THIS IS JUST--
TRILL.


TRILL.
IT'S ME IT'S PAPA
NOW CALM DOWN, DEAR.
TRILL HATES PAPA!
WHA . . .?


TRILL HATES PAPA! TRILL'S EGGS DIE.
EGGS DIE!
DIE!
TRILL HATES EGGS!

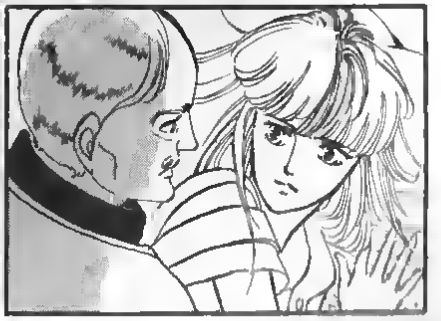

OH MY.
COULD SHE BE TALKING ABOUT HAVING HER OVA REMOVED?
DOES SHE MEAN SHE HATES THE EXPERI-MENTS?
THAT'S ABSURD! SHE DOESN'T UNDER-STAND ANYTHING!
YES, OF COURSE OH MY. SHE REALLY MUST COOPERATE WITH US.
BUT SHE'S NEVER SAID 'HATE' OR 'NO' BEFORE. .
I'M DOING THIS FOR THE SAKE OF HER SPECIES!
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY GO ON HOME, REIKO


"No"? "Hate"?
When did she learn such words?


Why have I cared for her and raised her all these years?
Because I want her species to survive.
And now I'm told that Trill has hated these experiments with her ova all along?
This research is my lifework. . .




TRILL.




MARRY ME, TRILL
I LOVE YOU
NO ...
DON'T ABANDON ME
YOU MUST FEEL SOME GRATITUDE, TRILL.
PLEASE MARRY ME
LET ME CONTINUE THE EXPERIMENTS
TRILL!
NO
TRILL !!
NO!


KYAAH!
THIS IS HIM.
LET'S GET A MOVE·ON LOOKS LIKE A MORNING STORM IS BREWING.
UNGHI
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK

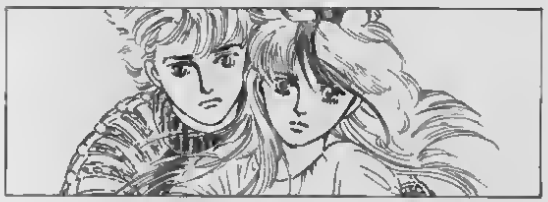

MO-RI
MORI
MORI
MORI
Trill?
What is it?
What's happened?
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
MORI
WAIT... THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG TAKE ME BACK
HUH!? I CAN'T DO THAT THERE'S NO TIME
VIPP
!!
TH-THE HANDLE IS—!?
What are you doing?
You're trying to open something?
BEEP BEEP
THAT'S THE AIRLOCK IN THE GARDEN.
Stop, Trill! Stay where you are!
I'm coming!


Don't open it! You'll—
TRILL!
4/4 [Quatre-Quarts]
GET HER INTO THAT AIRLOCK!
I'LL GET A DOCTOR!
STOP


SHE DIED FROM THE ELECTRICAL SHOCK.
IT WAS TOO LATE TO SAVE HER.
THANK GOODNESS.
THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T RELEASED HER EMOTIONS!
IF SHE HAD REMAINED IGNORANT
TMP
MORI!
I'LL KILL YOU
MORI!!
YOU UNDERSTAND NOTHING!
NOTHING ABOUT TRILL'S HEART!
ABOUT HER PAIN!
WELL, NOW YOU HAVE THE RIGHT OF YOUR LIFE TO REGRET IT!!
THAN REGRETTING SOMETHING ONE'S ENTIRE LIFE?
THIS IS WHY I DESPISE EMOTIONS.
IT'S GOING TO BE A BIT ROCKY, FOLKS.
THERE'S A YELLOW SODIUM AURORA.
SURE.
DO YOU THINK THERE'S SUCH A THING AS SPIRITS?
?? GOOD QUESTION


Mo-ri
We were two half-fledged people resonating.
Mo-ri
But there's no more resonance.
Trill. I don't need emotions.
Trill likes Mo-ri
I don't need





CHAPTER 3

X + Y

PART ONE




...


TMP
TMP
ZAZZ!
GOOD MORNING!
HOW'D IT GO!?
HOW'D IT GO?
I CAME ALL THE WAY HERE JUST BECAUSE YOU ASKED ME TO. AND FOR WHAT!


THIS WAS HIS FIRST TIME WITH A GIRL, WASN'T IT?
HAH!
WHAT A DRAG!
I FEEL LIKE I SLEPT WITH A DOLL.
...
TACTO.
GET DRESSED.


YOU LIKE HER!?
AFTER WHAT SHE SAID ABOUT YOU!? FORGET HER!
SHE'S A DOG HERSELF, BUT SHE ONLY GOES OUT WITH GOOD-LOOKING GUYS. SHE BEGGED ME TO INTRODUCE HER TO YOU.
DON'T WORRY! I'LL FIND SOMEONE WHO'S JUST RIGHT FOR YOU.
TRUST ME!!
KACHA

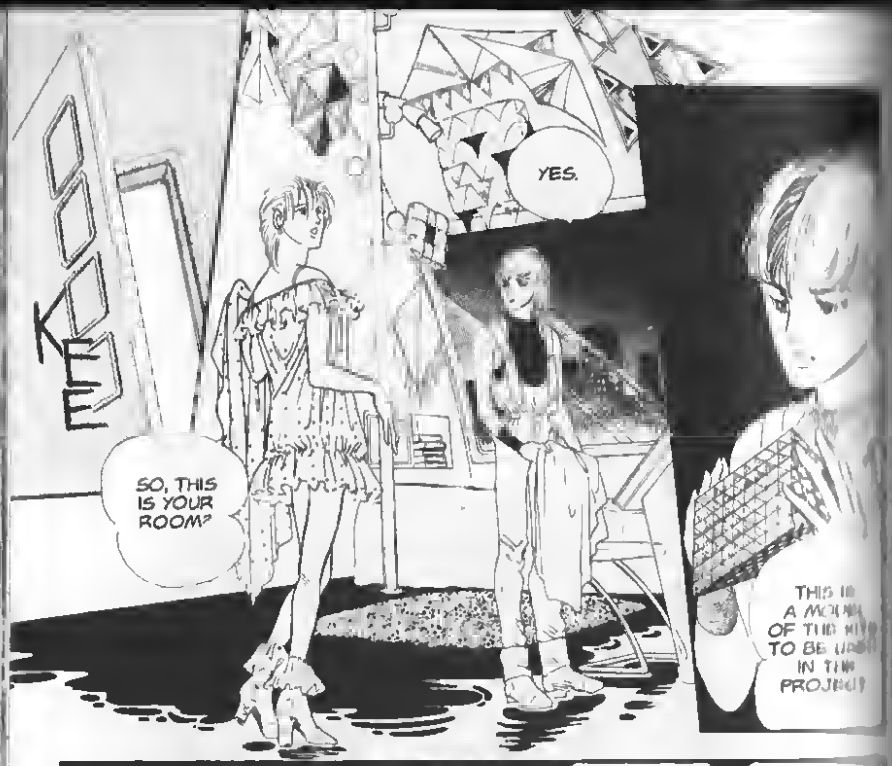

WELL I'M GOOD MORNING!
SO THE APPOINTMENT WAS FOR TACTO, WAS IT?
HI, AN-AN.

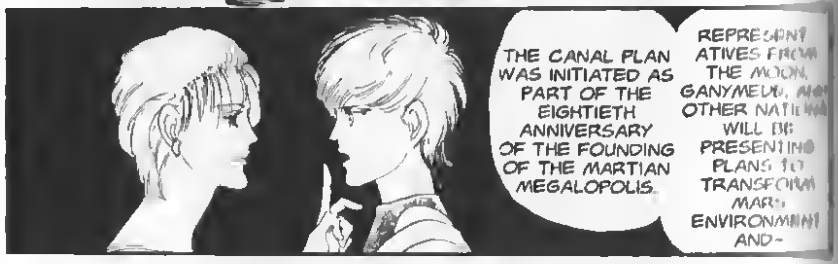

IT'S NOTHING. THIS STUBBORN UNICORN IS JUST—
YOU'RE ALWAYS SO QUIET, TACTO. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?


HE LIKES MERIMÉ.
TACTO!


BUT MERIMÉ CALLED HIM A DOLL.
HE WANTS TO GET ALONG WELL WITH MERIMÉ.
HMM.
I THINK I GET THE PICTURE
MERIMÉ IS MY COUSIN, AND LAST NIGHT AT THE PARTY SHE AND TACTO—
YOU TALK TOO MUCH, ZAZZ. BE QUIET
SNIFF SNIFF
IT JUST TAKES SOME GETTING USED TO, TACTO. IT'LL WORK OUT FINE.
BUT JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, LET'S TAKE A CAT SCAN AND DO A BLOOD TEST
I'LL HAVE THE RESULTS IN THREE DAYS
AREN'T YOU GOING TO THE LAB?
HE'LL GO AFTER HE CHECKS UP ON THE KITE IN THE PLASTIC MODEL.
I'LL GO WITH YOU WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT MERIMÉ, ANYWAY?
HER BANGS ARE RED
SHE DYED THEM RED!
TACTO! ZAZZ!
ROMAN.
THE TAKO PROJECT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR THE CANAL PLAN!! OUR TAKO PROJECT!
WHAT!?


CHAM-PAGNE!
TO THE TAKO PROJECT!
IS IT TRUE!?
SO WE LEAVE FOR MARS NEXT WEEK!?
THERE ARE MARTIANS ON MARS!
THERE WAS APPARENTLY SOME DEBATE ON THE FINAL VOICE THAT'S WHY IT TOOK SO LONG!
YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO REPRESENT EARTH!!
LONG LIVE ALLERGY CULTURE!!
BA-MM
TACTO! CONGRATU-LATIONS!
I JUST HEARD THE NEWS!!
MERIMÉ!?
M-M-MOOCH!
HAVE YOU NO SHAME!? I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!!
IT'S SO NOISY HERE.
TAKE ME TO YOUR COMPART MENT, TACTO
EASY, ZAZZ. LET THE LOVEBIRDS BE.

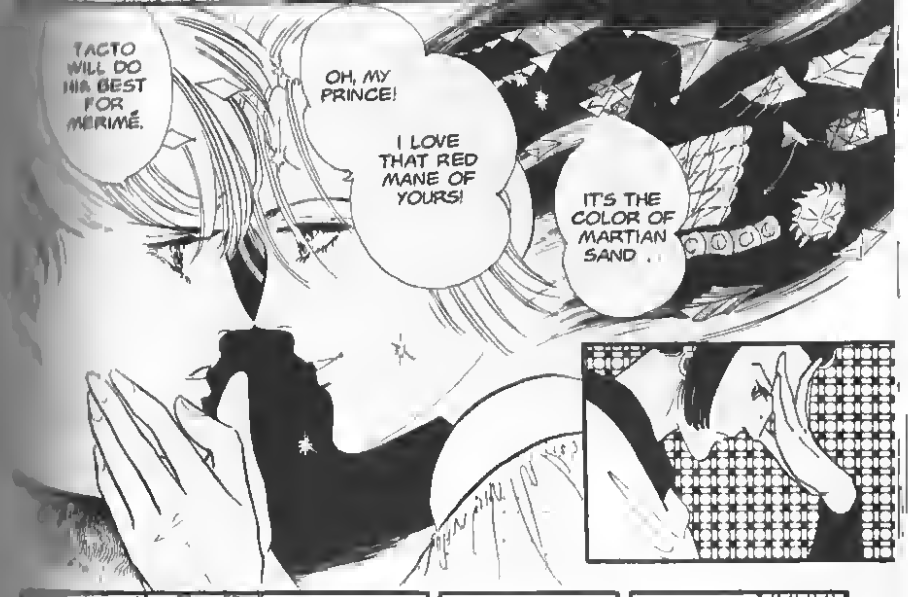

YES.
SO, THIS IS YOUR ROOM?


THE CANAL PLAN WAS INITIATED AS PART OF THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MARTIAN MEGALOPOLIS.


I DON'T CARE IF YOU DON'T QUITE "FUNCTION" PROPERLY.
I CAN HELP BRING YOU UP TO SPEED.
AND I'LL GET USED TO THE WAY YOU REFER TO YOURSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON.
WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN IS BEING REMEMBERED IN THE HISTORY BOOKS...


YOU'VE GOT TO BE CHOSEN, TACTO! AND MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF!


I'M THE PRINCESS, AND YOU'RE MY PRINCE!
DO IT FOR ME, TACTO!
YOU'LL BE MY HERO, WON'T YOU?


TACTO WILL DO HIS BEST FOR MERIMÉ.
OH, MY PRINCE!
I LOVE THAT RED MANE OF YOURS!
IT'S THE COLOR OF MARTIAN SAND...


AN-AN?
YOU'RE GOING WITH TACTO AND THE OTHERS TO MARS NEXT WEEK!
YOU'D BETTER START PACKING.


NEVER MIND THAT, GEORGE!
LOOK AT THIS!


HM? THIS IS TACTO'S...


K-CHA
AH, TACTO. COME IN.
SORRY TO CALL YOU SO ABRUPTLY
YOU SEE . . .
THE TRUTH IS, WE'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE MUST DISCUSS WITH YOU
I HAVE A SPRAY TACTO
TACTO IS BEING REMOVED FROM THE TAKO PROJECT AND CAN'T GO TO MARS?
HM? WH-WHAT?
OH, NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT YOU'LL BE GOING TO MARS WITH THE OTHER THREE
THIS IS ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE SOMETHING WELL... PERSONAL
WELL THEN, TACTO WILL LISTEN TO WHAT GEORGE HAS TO SAY ABOUT THIS DISCOVERY OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE
FLUMP
WHEN WE DISCOVERED THIS FACT, WE WEREN'T SURE WHAT WE SHOULD DO. WHETHER OR NOT TO TELL YOU. . . WE FRETTED—
WOULD YOU JUST GET TO THE POINT, DEAR!?
FWP


AS WAS SAID, WE TRIED—
THIS ISN'T YOUR PROBLEM TO FRET ABOUT! THIS IS TACTO'S PROBLEM, AND IT'S HIS RIGHT TO FRET OR NOT.
HIS RIGHT AND HIS ALONE!
TACTO, LAST WEEK WE DID A BLOOD TEST AND TOOK A CAT SCAN, RIGHT?
TACTO, THIS IS A SIMULATION OF YOUR BODY.
WHAT YOU SEE HERE IS A PRE-DEVELOPED UTERUS AND OVARIES.
THOSE ARE THE CHROMOSOMES WE EXTRACTED FROM YOUR BLOOD.
YOU ARE XX, TACTO.


NO, HE IS XY. THAT XX IS A MISTAKE.
TACTO WAS GIVEN A BLOOD TEST AT THE AGE OF SEVEN IN A HOSPITAL IN HONG KONG.
YOU HAVE NO MEMORY OF THAT INCIDENT.
YOU SHOULD HAVE NO MEMORIES BEFORE AGE SEVEN.
Y-YOU LOST THEM.. BECAUSE OF AN ILLNESS.
YOU SAW THOSE TEST RESULTS MUCH LATER
BUT IT IS THE TRUTH.
YES THAT IS, THE MISTAKE WAS MADE AT THE HOSPITAL IN HONG KONG.
BECAUSE YOU ARE XX, WE BELIEVE YOUR BODY WILL UNDERGO CERTAIN TRANSFORMATIONS UNIQUE TO FEMALES.
THE HUMAN REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS IN A PAIR OF DUCTS KNOWN AS THE "WOLFFIAN DUCT" AND THE "MULLERIAN DUCT"
SEX IS DETERMINED GENETICALLY. IN THE CASE OF AN XY, THE WOLFFIAN DUCT DEVELOPS. IN THE CASE OF AN XX THE MULLERIAN DUCT DEVELOPS.
THE ORGANS THAT HAVE DEVELOPED FROM YOUR WOLFFIAN DUCTS ARE, IN A SENSE, MERELY ORNAMENTAL. THEY DO NOT FUNCTION SEXUALLY IN ANY WAY.
HOWEVER, YOU WILL EVENTUALLY DEVELOP A UTERUS, OVARIES, AND MAMMARY GLANDS.
OF COURSE, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE A BABY IF YOU CHOOSE.
PHEW

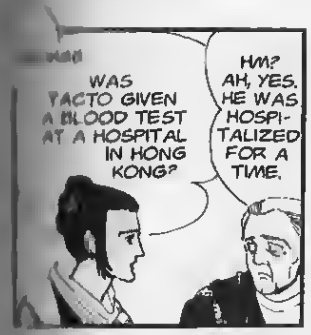

I'M SURE THIS MATTER MUST COME AS A SHOCK TO YOU. WE WERE SHOCKED, TOO, HOW WE FRETTED—
TACTO, YOU ARE BEING FORCED TO COME TO TERMS WITH A NEW REALITY. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DEAL WITH IT?
WHEN YOU RETURN FROM MARS, WE SHOULD BEGIN INJECTING YOU WITH FEMALE HORMONES.
WE MIGHT ALSO WANT TO REMOVE YOUR OVARIES, INCUBATE THEM TO FULL SIZE, AND PUT THEM BACK IN YOUR BODY.
HE WON'T BE INJECTED WITH FEMALE HORMONES
HE WON'T MAKE A BABY.
HE DOESN'T NEED OVARIES OR A UTERUS.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DECIDE ANYTHING RIGHT NOW, TACTO!
WHEN HE RETURNS FROM MARS, HE'LL HAVE THOSE ORGANS REMOVED.
NOW, IF AN-AN AND GEORGE WILL EXCUSE HIM, HE HAS TO GO PACK THE KITES
WAIT! TACTO!
WE HAVE TO DISCUSS THIS WITH PROFESSOR MOONSAULT.. YOUR FATHER.
DO YOU REMEMBER HIM? I BELIEVE HE'S IN THE TROJAN ASTEROID BELT NOW.
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO SEE HIM AGAIN? WE CAN GO TOGETHER.


TACTO IS NOT INTERESTED IN PROFESSOR MOONSAULT
PROFESSOR MOONSAULT IS NOT INTERESTED IN HIS SON
THERE IS NO NEED FOR THEM TO MEET


TACTO, WAIT! YOUVE JUST BEEN TOLD YOU'RE XX. DON'T YOU HAVE ANY REACTION AT ALL!?
AREN'T YOU UPSET? SHOCKED? CONFUSED?
THOSE ARE DESTABILIZING AND UNPRODUCTIVE EMOTIONS.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU NEVER WORRY OR FEEL CONFUSED AT ALL, DO YOU!? SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO!?
HE IS GOING TO MAKE THE TAKO PROJECT SUCCEED, MARRY MERIMA, AND SEE TO IT THAT SHE IS REMEMBERED IN HISTORY BOOKS.

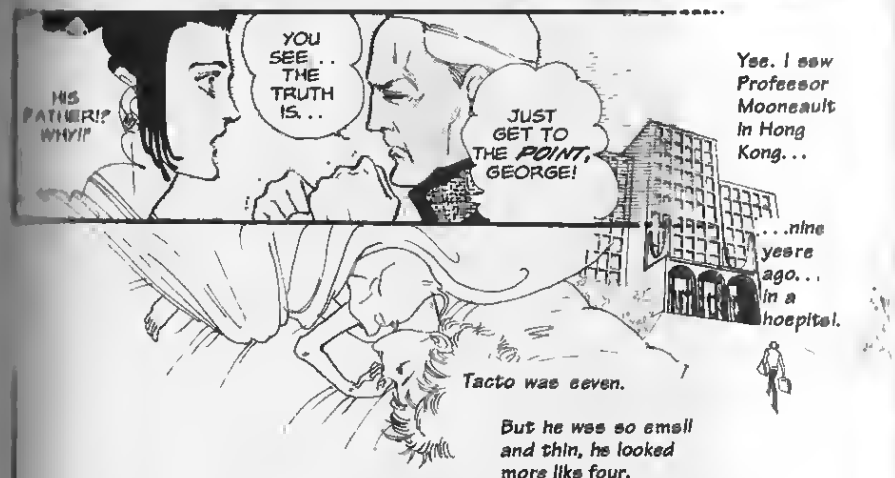

HMMM
I'VE KNOWN HIM SINCE HE WAS SEVEN, AND I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HIM!
BAMM


IS THAT INDIFFERENCE A TRAIT OF THE UNICORN SPECIES?
I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS QUIET IN COMPARISON TO THAT CHATTERBOX ZAZZ.
I THINK SO...
..BUT I DON'T KNOW THEY'RE A RARE, ATAVISTIC RACE, THE UNICORNS


WAS TACTO GIVEN A BLOOD TEST AT A HOSPITAL IN HONG KONG?
HM? AH, YES. HE WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR A TIME.


WHAT'S THIS ABOUT HIM HAVING NO MEMORIES BEFORE THE AGE OF SEVEN?


HMM.
PROFESSOR MOONSAULT REMOVED THEM


HIS FATHER!? WHY!?
YOU SEE.. THE TRUTH IS..
JUST GET TO THE POINT, GEORGE!
Yes. I saw Professor Moonsault in Hong Kong...
...nine years ago... in a hospital.
Tacto was seven.
But he was so small and thin, he looked more like four.

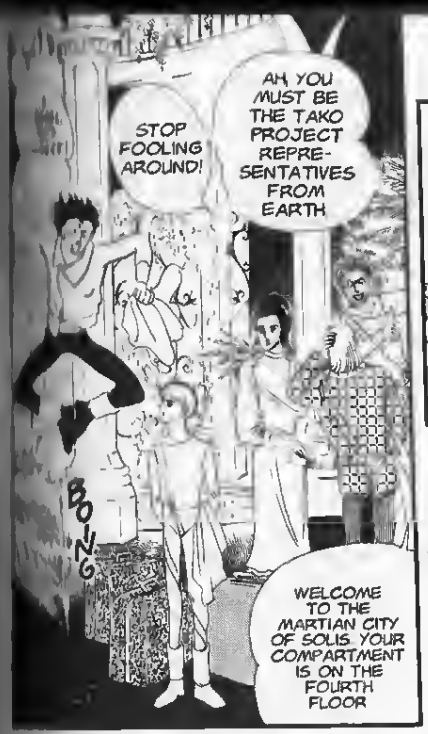

Hello, George...
I've erased my son's memories.
Last year, my wife committed suicide before his eyes.
The shock was such that he stopped eating.


When he's grown, I'll tell him about his mother.
I'm headed for the Trojan asteroid belt.
George. I want you to take care of my son for me.
I'll send you money to cover his expenses. Every year.


I took the boy back to San Francisco with me. . .
. . .and put him in the Allergy Culture's daycare center.
He was like a newborn baby. He had to learn to speak from scratch at the age of seven.
At the age of eleven, he became one of Allergy Culture's brains.
GAH GAH!
HI!
BABA
na na na na na..
I NEVER KNEW.
I DIDN'T MEET HIM UNTIL HE BECAME A BRAIN
BUT REALLY, WHAT AN IRRESPONSIBLE FATHER.
I'VE GOT A PICTURE OF HIM AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.
WE WERE IN GRAD SCHOOL TOGETHER IN HAWAII.
AH, HERE IT IS.
THIS WAS TAKEN AT OUR GRADUATION PARTY.
WRIGHT MOONSAULT.
THIS . . . WOMAN!?
IT WAS A COSTUME PARTY. HE WAS MARIE ANTOINETTE.
I-IT CERTAINLY IS A CONVINCING DISGUISE. HIS CHEST LOOKS LIKE THE REAL THING!
THAT'S MARBLE NEXT TO HIM — HIS WIFE, WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE.
THE TWO WERE APPARENTLY LIVING TOGETHER IN HONG KONG AFTER GRADUATION
LIVING TOGETHER!?
HMP


SO TACTO'S FATHER WAS GAY?
YES THEY WERE FORMALLY MARRIED
SO [illegible] IS THE WIFE" WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE
WAIT A MINUTE. IN THAT CASE, WHO WAS TACTO'S MOTHER?
OBVIOUSLY NOT THIS PERSON.
A MAN CAN'T GIVE BIRTH TO A CHILD, AFTER ALL.
I ASKED, BUT HE WOULDN'T TELL ME.
DID HE GET SOME WOMAN PREGNANT? HE REALLY IS IRRESPONSIBLE
MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T VISIT PROFESSOR MOONSAULT IN THE TROJAN ASTEROID BELT.
YOU MUST GO!
AND YOU MUST TAKE TACTO WITH YOU!
YOU HAVE TO MAKE TACTO AND HIS FATHER MEET. . .
. . AND GET MOONSAULT TO HELP YOU CONVINCE TACTO TO BECOME A WOMAN.
THE SOONER WE GIVE TACTO THE HORMONE SHOTS THE BETTER!
I'LL DO MY BEST

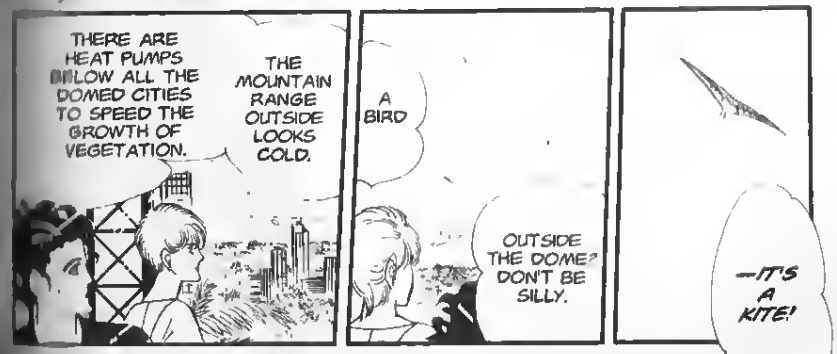

Red Mars awaits
Mars, whose color is like that of your mane
Send word to your lover: Here I will make for you a garden...
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO MARS BEFORE!
LOOK! THIS IS WHERE WE'RE GOING TO FLY OUR KITES!


STOP FOOLING AROUND!
AH, YOU MUST BE THE TAKO PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES FROM EARTH
BONG
WELCOME TO THE MARTIAN CITY OF SOLIS. YOUR COMPARTMENT IS ON THE FOURTH FLOOR


SO YOU'LL BE STAYING WITH US FOR HALF A MONTH?
NO, ONE MONTH! THE CANAL PLAN CONFERENCE RUNS FOR FOUR WEEKS

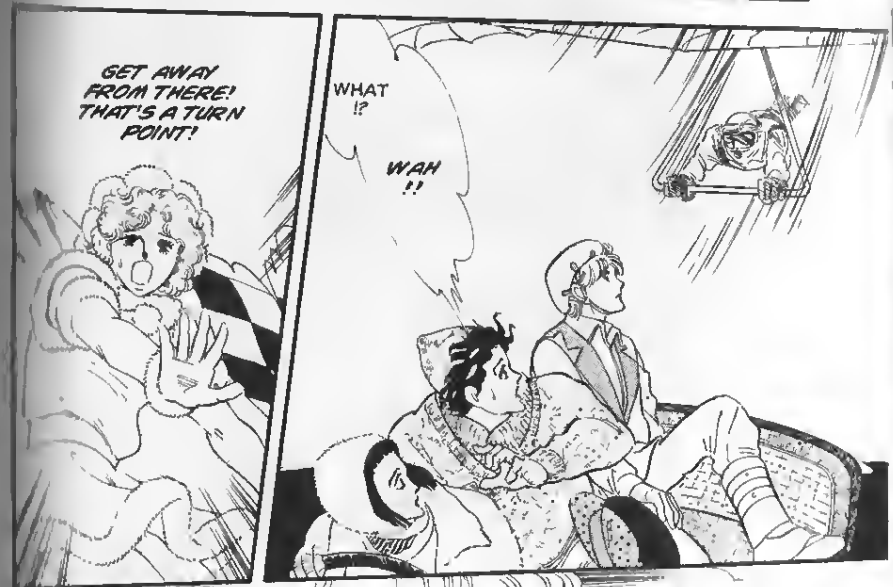

IF YOU'LL LOOK AT THE CALENDAR, SIR, YOU'LL SEE THAT A MARTIAN MONTH IS EIGHT WEEKS LONG.
EHEM!
ARE YOU ALSO ONE OF THE 'BRAINS' FROM EARTH?


WELL NOW THAT ZAZZ HAS PROMPTLY REINFORCED THE IMAGE OF THE ARROGANT, ETHNOCENTRIC TERRAN . .
WHOOSH, IT'S HOT!
IT MUST BE NEARLY A HUNDRED AND FIVE DEGREES!
ALL A MAN NEEDS HERE IS A LOINCLOTH!


THERE ARE HEAT PUMPS BELOW ALL THE DOMED CITIES TO SPEED THE GROWTH OF VEGETATION.
THE MOUNTAIN RANGE OUTSIDE LOOKS COLD.
A BIRD
OUTSIDE THE DOME? DON'T BE SILLY.
—IT'S A KITE!


IT'S A KITE RACE!
WE GOT HERE JUST IN TIME. THIS IS GREAT!
THAT GOLD AND WHITE KITE IS FAST
WHAT'S THE NAME? "I, ICARUS"?


THEY COLLECT RIBBONS WORTH EITHER TWO OR THREE POINTS. THE ONE WHO ENDS UP WITH THE MOST POINTS WINS.
LET'S STOP THE CAR UP THERE AND WATCH.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU GUYS, BUT I'M COLD BRRR.


GET AWAY FROM THERE! THAT'S A TURN POINT!
WHAT !?
WAH !!

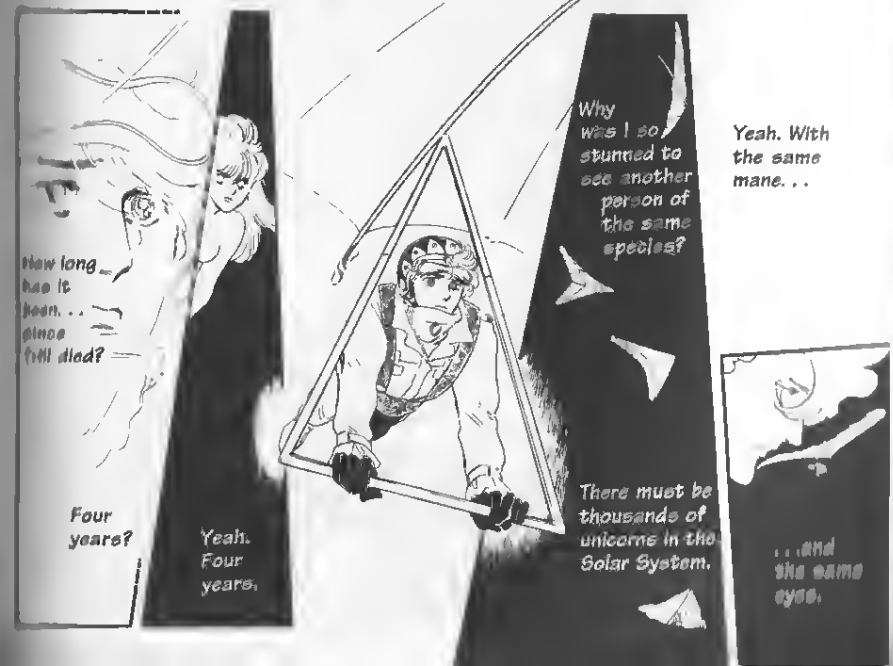

A GOLDEN—


MORI'S DISQUALI-FIED!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM CRASH BEFORE!
I BLEW IT.
BUT YOU USUALLY MANEUVER SO WELL!
AH!
IS HIS KITE ALL RIGHT!?


A red mane...!
I-it's a unicorn!
AH!
...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU'RE NOT HURT?
TACTO!
DON'T HANDLE THE GUY'S KITE!
GIVE IT BACK TO HIM!
IS THIS HIS?
DID HE MAKE IT?
THAT'S MORI'S "ICARUS."
HE'LL GIVE IT BACK TO HIM.
WHISH
WELL, "HE'D" BETTER! WHO IS THIS GUY, ANY-WAY!?
THIS IS A GOOD KITE.
Move.
MOVE, Mori.
You're acting like a frog being stared down by a snake.
That hair.
Those eyes.

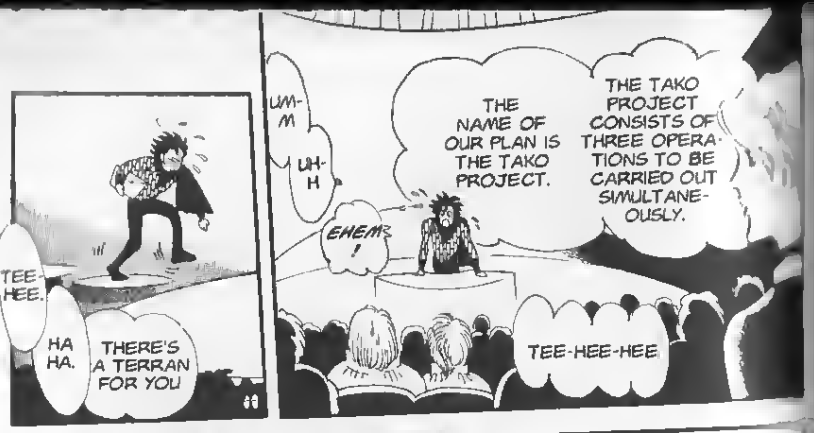

They're the same as Trill's.
HE HAS A KALEIDO-SCOPE EYE
!
HUH?
DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME IS, MORI?
MORI!? THE FAMOUS BOY WHO CAN MOVE A MOUNTAIN WITH TELEKINESIS!?
GLOMM
HUH!? I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS SO YOUNG!!
COOL!
WH-WHO THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS!?
VISHH


YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG GUY!
WAIT!
TMP!
FWOOSH
THE WRONG GUY?
NO, IT'S HIM!
SO HE LIVES HERE IN SOLIS.

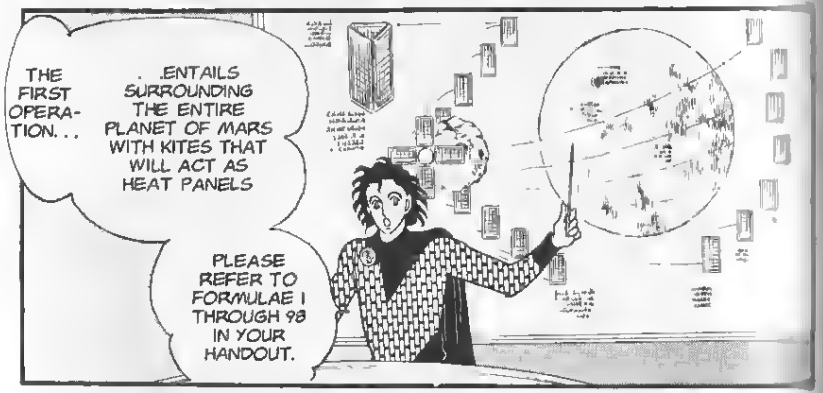

How long has it been. . . since Trill died?
Four years?
Yeah. Four years.
Why was I so stunned to see another person of the same species?
There must be thousands of unicorns in the Solar System.
Yeah. With the same mane. . .
. . . and the same eyes.

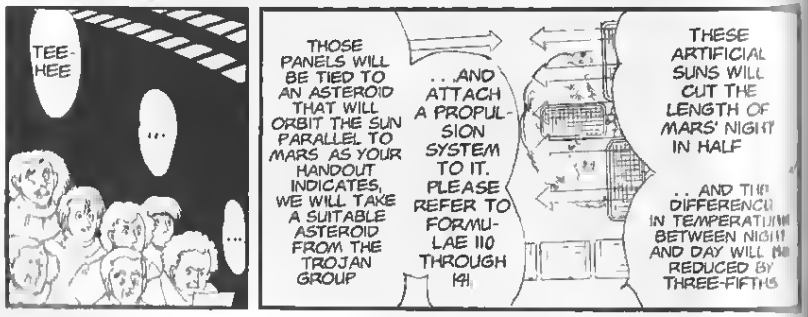

HEY! MORI!
DON'T MAKE SUCH A SOUR FACE I'M SORRY ABOUT YESTER-DAY.
SO YOU'RE PARTICIPATING IN THE CANAL PLAN CONFERENCE, TOO?
I'M JUST WORKING HERE AS A MESSEN-GER.
WE'RE THE REPRESENTA-TIVES FROM EARTH. I'M ZAZZ, AND THIS IS ROMAN, AND THIS IS AN-AN . . .
. . . AND THEN THERE'S TACTO. HEY TACTO!
D DUMP!
...
QUIT SCREWING AROUND!
HE SLIPPED.
YOU'RE IN THE SPOTLIGHT AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF EARTH! DON'T TRIP ON A CEREMONIAL OCCASION

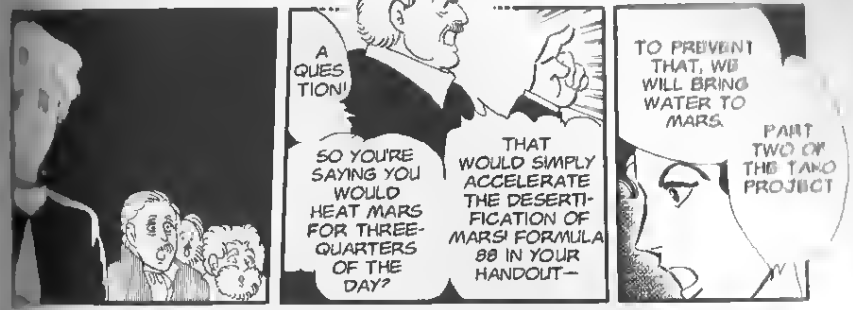

LADIES AND GENTLE-MEN.
REPRESENTATIVES FROM PLANETS, SATELLITES, AND CITIES THROUGHOUT THE SOLAR SYSTEM ALLOW ME TO FORMALLY OPEN THE CANAL PLAN CONFERENCE!
. . . ARE THE ELEVEN PLANS FOR TRANSFORM-ING MARS THAT WE HAVE BEFORE US AT THIS CONFERENCE. . .
Representatives of Earth? So they're "brains," are they?
Includ-ing him?
He's a far cry from Trill. She could barely talk.
And now that I get a better look at him, he doesn't really look much like Trill.
It's just his hair. . . his eyes. . . and the air about him.
THE THEME OF THE CANAL PLAN IS 'RAISING THE ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE OF MARS TO THREE HUNDRED MILLIBARS.'
AND NOW THE REPRESENTA-TIVES FROM THE EARTH'S ALLERGY NATURE CENTER.
SLIP
YES, SIR!
D DUMP
ZAZZ IS SCREWING AROUND.
...
SH-H!


TEE-HEE.
HA HA.
THERE'S A TERRAN FOR YOU
UM-M
UH-H
EHEM?!
THE NAME OF OUR PLAN IS THE TAKO PROJECT.
THE TAKO PROJECT CONSISTS OF THREE OPERATIONS TO BE CARRIED OUT SIMULTANEOUSLY.
TEE-HEE-HEE


"TAKO" IN JAPANESE MEANS "KITE," BUT HAS A HOMONYM MEANING "OCTOPUS." START THE SIMULATION, PLEASE!


THE FIRST OPERATION. . .
. . .ENTAILS SURROUNDING THE ENTIRE PLANET OF MARS WITH KITES THAT WILL ACT AS HEAT PANELS
PLEASE REFER TO FORMULAE 1 THROUGH 98 IN YOUR HANDOUT.


TEE-HEE
. . .
. . .
THOSE PANELS WILL BE TIED TO AN ASTEROID THAT WILL ORBIT THE SUN PARALLEL TO MARS AS YOUR HANDOUT INDICATES. WE WILL TAKE A SUITABLE ASTEROID FROM THE TROJAN GROUP
. . .AND ATTACH A PROPULSION SYSTEM TO IT. PLEASE REFER TO FORMULAE 110 THROUGH 141.
THESE ARTIFICIAL SUNS WILL CUT THE LENGTH OF MARS' NIGHT IN HALF
. . .AND THE DIFFERENCE IN TEMPERATURE BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY WILL BE REDUCED BY THREE-FIFTHS


A QUESTION!
SO YOU'RE SAYING YOU WOULD HEAT MARS FOR THREE-QUARTERS OF THE DAY?
THAT WOULD SIMPLY ACCELERATE THE DESERTIFICATION OF MARS! FORMULA 88 IN YOUR HANDOUT—
TO PREVENT THAT, WE WILL BRING WATER TO MARS.
PART TWO OF THE TAKO PROJECT

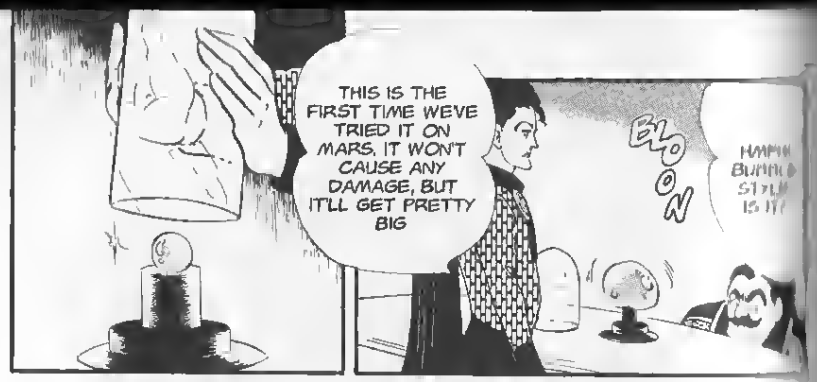

. . .INVOLVES CARRYING A PRESCRIBED AMOUNT OF WATER FROM SATURN'S OUTERMOST RING, THE G RING. SEE FORMULA 333.
USING A SHIELD, WE'LL GATHER THE REQUISITE ICE FROM THE RING INTO A GIANT SNOWBALL AND ROLL IT TO MARS WITH ROCKETS.

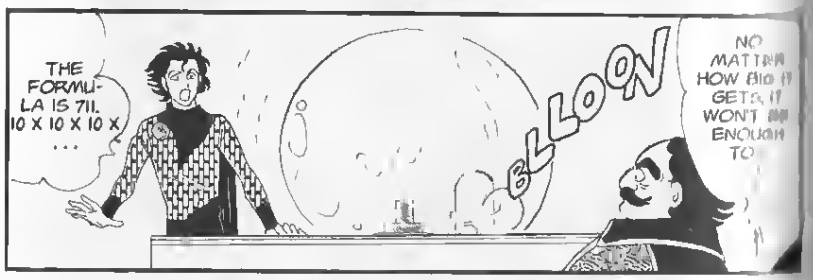

HUH. . .?
UTTER NON-SENSE!!
ARE YOU UNFAMILIAR WITH THE SPACE ASSESSMENT LAW!?
THE RINGS OF SATURN HAVE EXISTED FOR BILLIONS OF YEARS! YOU CAN'T JUST—
WE CAN DO THIS WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW.
IN ORDER TO MAKE THE SNOWBALL QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY, WE'LL NEED AN INDIVIDUAL WITH CONSIDERABLE TELEKINETIC POWERS.


MUMBLE
MUMBLE
TELE-KINESIS!?
WHAT!? THERE IS NO SUCH INDIVIDUAL!
I'VE HEARD THERE ARE TELEKINES ON MARS WHO CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS.
OLD KUUP HAS GONE SENILE AND MAA'I IS SERIOUSLY ILL.


WHAT ABOUT MORI, THE "KALEIDO-SCOPE EYE"?
FASH
MORI!?
HA HA HA HA
MORI'S A FORMER TELEPHONE
HE'S WORKING HERE TODAY AS A MESSEN-GER.
NOW HE'S JUST A THIRD-RATE COLLEGE STUDENT WHO'S ONLY INTERESTED IN KITE RACES!
HE'S A FALLEN ICARUS!
WE'VE TRIED BRINGING WATER TO MARS BEFORE! BUT THE IRON-RICH SOIL THAT COM-PLETELY COVERS MARS BREAKS THE WATER DOWN!
YOUR PLAN WOULD BE NOTHING BUT A STOPGAP MEASURE.
THAT'S WHERE PART THREE COMES IN
THIS IS A GEL--AN IMPROVED VERSION OF A-A-G-66, WHICH PRODUCES A PHASE TRANSITION.
SEE FOR-MULAE 700 THROUGH 720.
WHEN EXPOSED TO HEAT AND WATER, IT DISSOLVES THE IRON OXIDE IN THE SOIL AND PRODUCES O_2 IN GAS FORM
ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS IT WOULD COMPLETELY COVER THE SURFACE OF MARS IN FIFTY-SIX DAYS
...
...


SEE FORMULAE 888 THROUGH 900. IN THIS WAY, THE THREE-PART TAKO PROJECT WILL RAISE THE ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE OF MARS TO 600 MILLIBARS, RAISE THE AMOUNT OF OXYGEN IN THE ATMOSPHERE TO 22 PERCENT, AND, WITHIN A PERIOD OF 100 YEARS, PRODUCE AN OZONE LAYER.
...
BUT THIS FORMULA--
IN THIS CASE THE ORBIT--
J_2 - 1829 X 10-6--
THE MOMENT OF INERTIA--
BUT DUST WOULD BE MORE--
BOTHE'S LAW--
THAT WOULD BE 1027P--
THE REPRE-SENTATIVES OF EARTH ARE FRAUDS!
A GEL PHASE TRANSITION COULDN'T POSSIBLY COVER THE ENTIRE PLANET MARS IN FIFTY-SIX DAYS!
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT IF YOU SAW IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES?
HAH! SHOW ME IF YOU CAN!
IF IT WAS SO EASY TO REMAKE A PLANET THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY NEED FOR THIS CONFERENCE!!


THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE TRIED IT ON MARS. IT WON'T CAUSE ANY DAMAGE, BUT IT'LL GET PRETTY BIG
BLOON
HMPH BUBBLE STYLE IS IT?

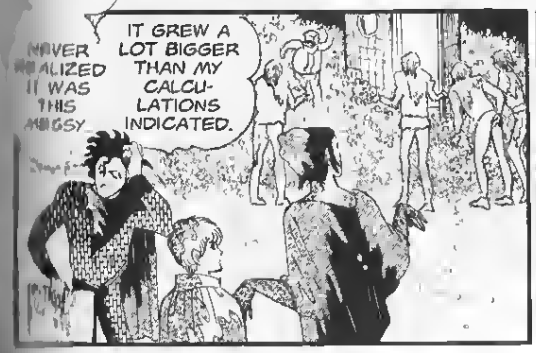

THE FORMULA IS 711. 10 X 10 X 10 X ...
BLLOON
NO MATTER HOW BIG IT GETS, IT WON'T BE ENOUGH TO


BWAH
WAHHH!!


THE GEL DRIES PERIODICALLY AND SOLATES IF YOU'LL LOOK AT FORMULA 719...!
AHHHH
WAHHH


TACTO.
GASP
BLORP


TACTO!
YICK


NEVER REALIZED IT WAS THIS MUGGY
IT GREW A LOT BIGGER THAN MY CALCULATIONS INDICATED.


YOU CAN'T GO HOME LIKE THAT, MORI.
OUR ROOMING HOUSE IS RIGHT NEXT DOOR YOU CAN WASH OFF THERE

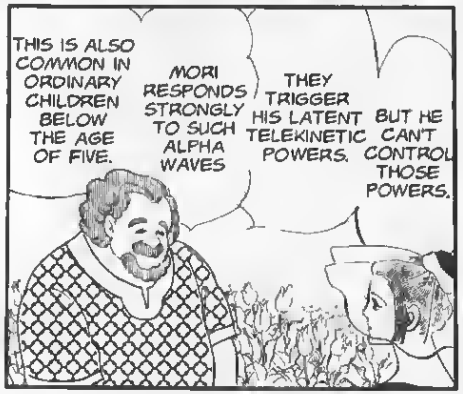

PSSH
DO YOU THINK THEY'LL DEPORT US FROM THE PLANET, AN-AN?
WHY? THEY'RE THE ONES WHO WANTED TO SEE THE GEL GROW.
TACTO, YOU HAVEN'T DROWNED IN THERE TOO, HAVE YOU?
PSSH
NO
THANKS FOR PULLING TACTO OUT OF THE BUBBLES, MORI.
I'VE GOT TO MAKE SOME ADJUST-MENTS TO THAT GEL.
WHY IS MORI . . .
. . . "A FALLEN ICARUS"?
AH? EH? AH?
I-IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME
Y-YOU KNOW A CHILD PRODIGY GROWS UP INTO AN ORDINARY ADULT
This unicorn is pretty talkative, isn't he?
He's nothing but bones.
SHISH
FLOOP

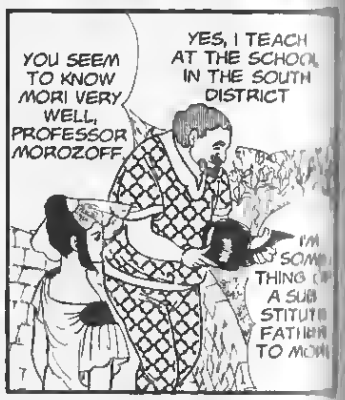

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
DON'T YOU KNOW NOT TO STRIP IN FRONT OF A WOMAN!?
THE SHIRT SIMPLY FELL OF ITS OWN ACCORD.
I, UM
I'VE GOT TO BE GOING NOW, SO
Impure thoughts
Did I do that!?
WHERE DO YOU LIVE, MORI?
IN A UNIVERSITY DORM IN THE SOUTH DISTRICT.
YEAH.
IS IT NEARBY?
THEN COME BACK AND SEE US AGAIN!
YOU'RE THE FIRST MARTIAN FRIEND WE'VE MADE.
UH, SEE YA—
TWOOP
WAHHH!!


TACTO IS—!!
TMP
MORI!!

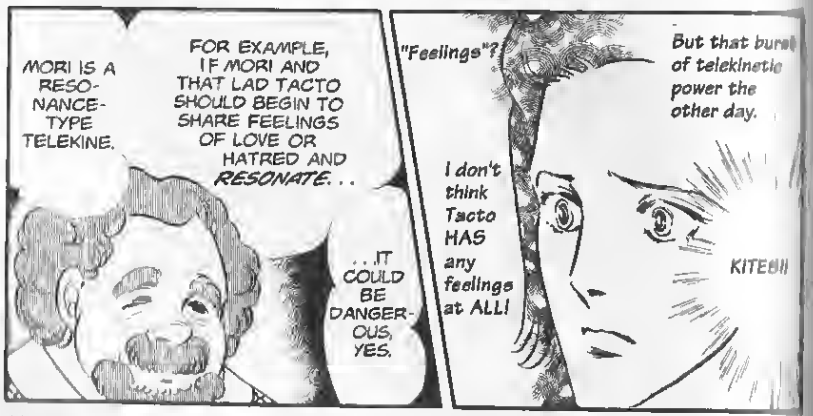

SHASH
MORI! TACTO!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?
NO PROB-LEM.
THE GRAVITY IS ONE-THIRD WHAT IT IS ON EARTH.
IT'S A SLOW FALL
DID YOU SEE THAT? THAT WAS MORI'S DOING!
HE'S THE MAN TO MAKE OUR SNOWBALL!
TACTO THINKS
. . .THIS MUST BE JUST WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO FLY ON A KITE.
TO FLY ON MORI'S GOLDEN ICARUS.
. . .


UNICORNS PRODUCE AN EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT OF BRAINWAVES, INCLUDING ALPHA WAVES.


THIS IS ALSO COMMON IN ORDINARY CHILDREN BELOW THE AGE OF FIVE.
MORI RESPONDS STRONGLY TO SUCH ALPHA WAVES
THEY TRIGGER HIS LATENT TELEKINETIC POWERS.
BUT HE CAN'T CONTROL THOSE POWERS.


YOU SEEM TO KNOW MORI VERY WELL, PROFESSOR MOROZOFF.
YES, I TEACH AT THE SCHOOL IN THE SOUTH DISTRICT
I'M SOMETHING OF A SUBSTITUTE FATHER TO MORI


IS IT DANGEROUS TO ALLOW TACTO AND MORI TO BE TOGETHER?
IT DEPENDS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM


MORI IS A RESONANCE-TYPE TELEKINE.
FOR EXAMPLE, IF MORI AND THAT LAD TACTO SHOULD BEGIN TO SHARE FEELINGS OF LOVE OR HATRED AND RESONATE...
...IT COULD BE DANGEROUS, YES.
"Feelings"?
I don't think Tacto HAS any feelings at ALL!
But that burst of telekinetic power the other day.
KITES!!


I'M HOME, MORI'S FATHER!
MORI INVITED HIM TO GO FLY ON A KITE WITH HIM.


WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP HIM?
I WAS SUPPOSED TO STOP HIM?


I THINK MORI WOULD MAKE A BETTER PARTNER FOR TACTO THAN MERIMÉ
SINCE WHEN ARE YOU AGAINST SAME SEX PARTNERSHIPS?
JUST CLEAN UP THIS FOAM!


IT'S THE KITES!!
Tacto is thinking of Mori as a KITE . . . or a PART of a kite.
I just hope nothing bad happens!


IT'S A GOOD WIND.
I THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO FLY FOR TWO OR THREE HOURS.
LET THEM GO.


I'LL MAINTAIN OUR BALANCE YOU JUST KEEP AS STILL AS POSSIBLE
ALL RIGHT.
KE'
FOOSH
ICARUS


WELL
IT FEELS GOOD.
IT'S GOING VERY SMOOTHLY.
THE SUN'S GOING DOWN.
WE'RE ON THE EDGE OF NIGHT AND DAY.
HERE WE GO.
Am I...
...thinking of him...
...as TRILL?
STARS
...!


MO-
RI
STARS.
M-MY HAIR GOT IN MY EYES.
IT'S NOTH-ING.
MORI?


WHAT DO YOU MEAN, AN EXPERIMENT TO TRIGGER RAINFALL USING A "DUST COUNTERFLOW"!? FORMULAE 1 THROUGH 61 CLEARLY SHOW THERE IS PRACTICALLY NO WATER ON MARS!
IF WE FOLLOW THE MOON REPRESENTATIVE'S LEISURELY PLAN, IT'LL BE A THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE THERE ARE ANY RESULTS! HUMANKIND WILL BE EXTINCT BY THEN!


SILENCE, YOU TERRAN PROVINCIAL!
JUST WATCH ME DEMONSTRATE MY NEW GEL!
WHAT!? AND RENDER THE HALL UNUSABLE AGAIN!?

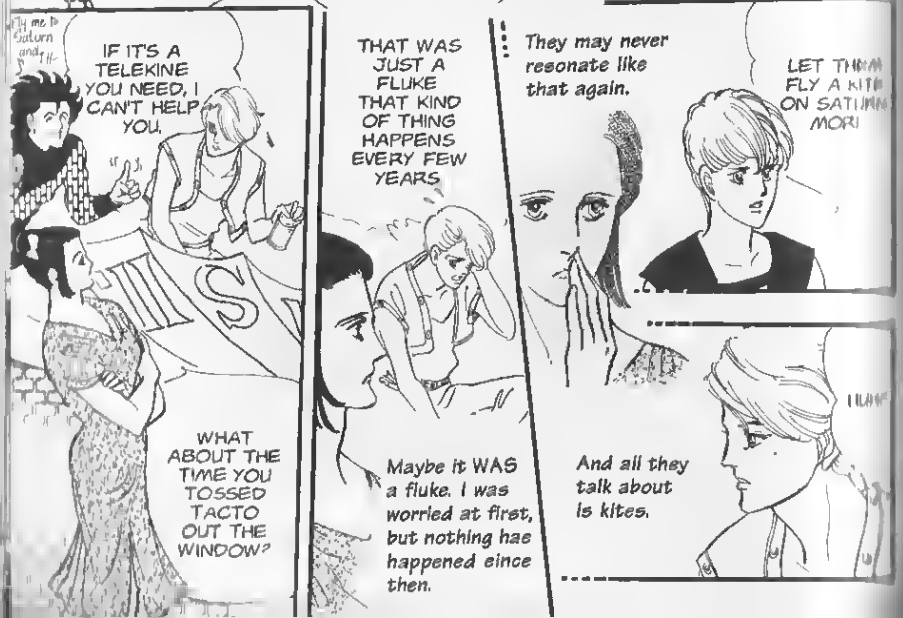

ARE ALL ACADEMIC CONFERENCES LIKE THIS!?
HFF HFF
HAA HAA
WE TERRANS HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH HEMOGLOBIN TO HANDLE THIS LOW AIR PRESSURE


YOUR TAKO PLAN IS UNIQUE
HM? AH, THANKS


I'M CHITON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TITAN.
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO COMING TO SATURN?


IF YOU WANT TO BE SURE YOUR PLAN TO MAKE A SNOWBALL FROM SATURN'S G RING WON'T VIOLATE THE ASSESSMENT LAW, YOU'LL HAVE TO TEST IT FIRSTHAND.
!
APPROVAL FROM TITAN WOULD PRACTICALLY GUARANTEE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE TAKO PLAN.


WHAT'S THIS?
THE ICARUS II.
FOR TACTO.
IT'S ALMOST FINISHED
YOU'RE BUILDING KITES!?
HEY, FOLKS! WE'RE GOING TO SATURN!
WE'RE GOING TO TRY TO MAKE A SNOWBALL FROM THE G RING!
YOU'RE COMING TOO, MORI!


IF IT'S A TELEKINE YOU NEED, I CAN'T HELP YOU.
WHAT ABOUT THE TIME YOU TOSSED TACTO OUT THE WINDOW?
THAT WAS JUST A FLUKE THAT KIND OF THING HAPPENS EVERY FEW YEARS.
Maybe it WAS a fluke. I was worried at first, but nothing hae happened eince then.
They may never resonate like that again.
LET THEM FLY A KITE ON SATURN MORI
And all they talk about is kites.


THEY CAN ATTACH A SPACE SCOOTER IN PLACE OF A BICYCLE.
...

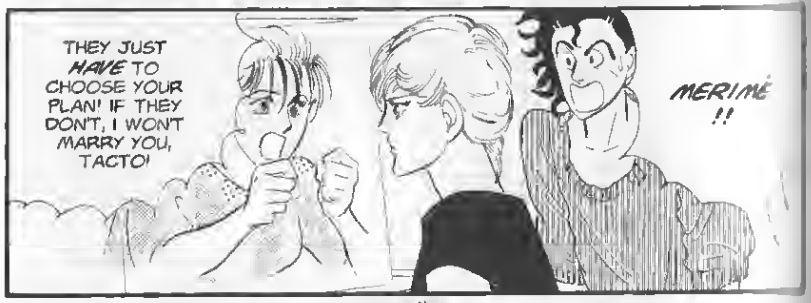

TACTO.
PHONE CALL FOR YOU-FROM EARTH. IT'S MERIMÉ!


TACTO'S FIANCÉE
...
TACTO!
I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH! IT'S BEEN TWO WHOLE WEEKS!


TACTO IS HAPPY TO SEE MERIMÉ
I'VE BEEN SO LONELY WITHOUT YOU HOW'S MY PRINCE?
TACTO'S NOT LONELY. TACTO'S VERY BUSY.

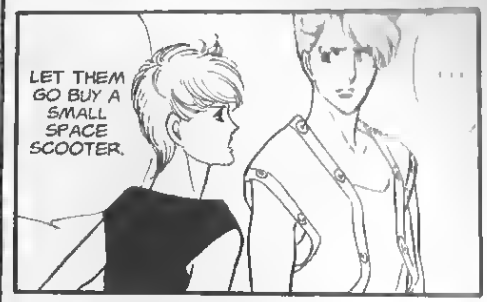
MEETING AFTER MEETING, HUH? HOW'S IT COMING ALONG?
THEY'RE GOING TO SATURN TO CONDUCT AN EXPERIMENT.
WOW! THAT'S GREAT!

SO THE TAKO PLAN WAS CHOSEN!?
NOT YET
BUT THEY HAVE TO SUPPORT OF HALF THE PARTICI PANTS

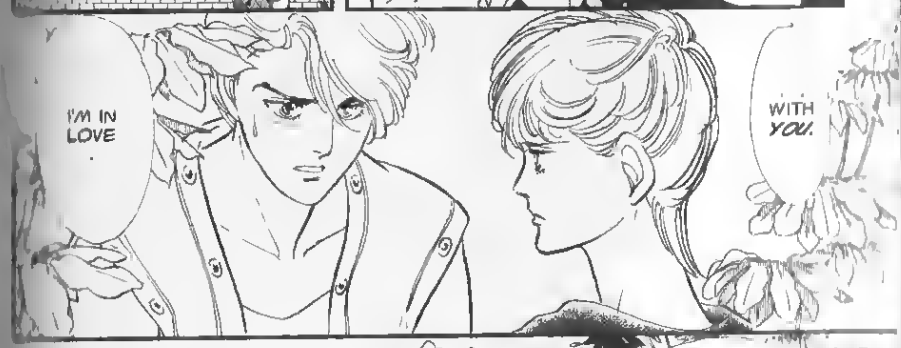

THEY JUST HAVE TO CHOOSE YOUR PLAN! IF THEY DON'T, I WON'T MARRY YOU, TACTO!
MERIMÉ !!


TMR
Fiancée, huh?
I shouldn't be surprised.
Even in these days of "anything goes," that's still the most orthodox kind of love.
One man, one woman.
...


MORI.


LET THEM GO BUY A SMALL SPACE SCOOTER.
...

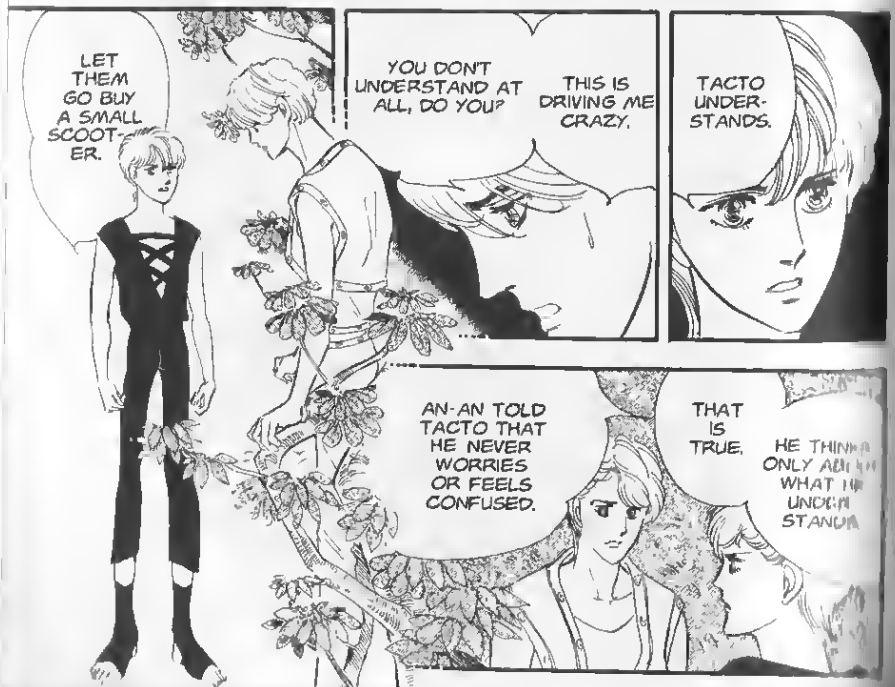

WHAT'S WRONG?


I'M IN LOVE
WITH YOU.




SO MORI IS A HOMO-SEXUAL.
THERE WAS THIS GIRL, YOU SEE
HER NAME WAS TRILL
SHE WAS A UNICORN


WHEN I FLEW ON THE ICARUS WITH YOU
. . . I FELT AS IF TRILL WAS RIGHT BY MY SIDE
MAYBE I'M CONFUSING YOU WITH HER.
BUT STILL
I LOVE YOU
TACTO PREFERS MERIMÉ.


LET THEM GO BUY A SMALL SCOOTER.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL, DO YOU?
THIS IS DRIVING ME CRAZY.
TACTO UNDERSTANDS.
AN-AN TOLD TACTO THAT HE NEVER WORRIES OR FEELS CONFUSED.
THAT IS TRUE.
HE THINKS ONLY ABOUT WHAT HE UNDERSTANDS


MORI SHOULD FALL IN LOVE WITH TRILL.
SHE DIED, FOUR YEARS AGO.
WELL, THEN . . .
MORI SHOULD FALL IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE


YOU DON'T "UNDERSTAND" A DAMNED THING!
ARE YOU "THINKING" ABOUT MY FEELINGS AT ALL!?
NO, YOU'RE NOT "THINKING" ABOUT ME AT ALL!
WHY? BECAUSE YOU DON'T "THINK" ABOUT WHAT YOU DON'T "UNDERSTAND"!!



Merimé is definitely not the person for Tacto.

But on the other hand, Mori could be even worse. If they fall in love, it could be disastrous

Oh boy.

ON THE WAY TO MARS WE'LL HAVE TO STOP BY THE TROJAN GROUP.

...AND SEE TACTO'S FATHER.

OH, AND I HAVE TO ASK ABOUT TACTO'S MOTHER, TOO.




When am I going to grow up?
The ship Tacto is on is heading for Saturn.
A six-day voyage.
They've probably passed Jupiter's orbit by now. .


This is ridiculous!
FUMP


It's time to quit sulking.
I'm going to call Tacto's ship.


TACTO!
A CALL FROM MARS! IT'S MORI!


MORI?
WHO'S THAT?


HOW ARE YOU?
HOW'S THE TRIP?


WHO IS HE?

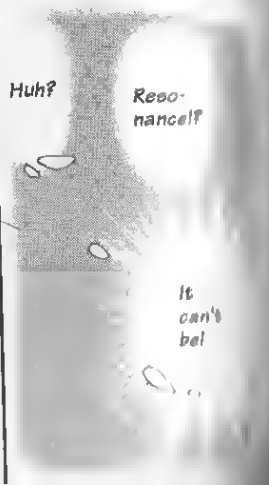

WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S MORI, TACTO
MORI?
LOOK CAREFULLY. IT'S MORI, FROM MARS.
TACTO DOESN'T KNOW HIM


WHA—!? COME ON, TACTO!
JUST BECAUSE WE HAD A FIGHT LIKE THAT... I-I FINALLY GOT UP THE NERVE TO CALL YOU, AND—


A FIGHT? ABOUT WHAT?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN BETWEEN YOU AND TACTO?
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

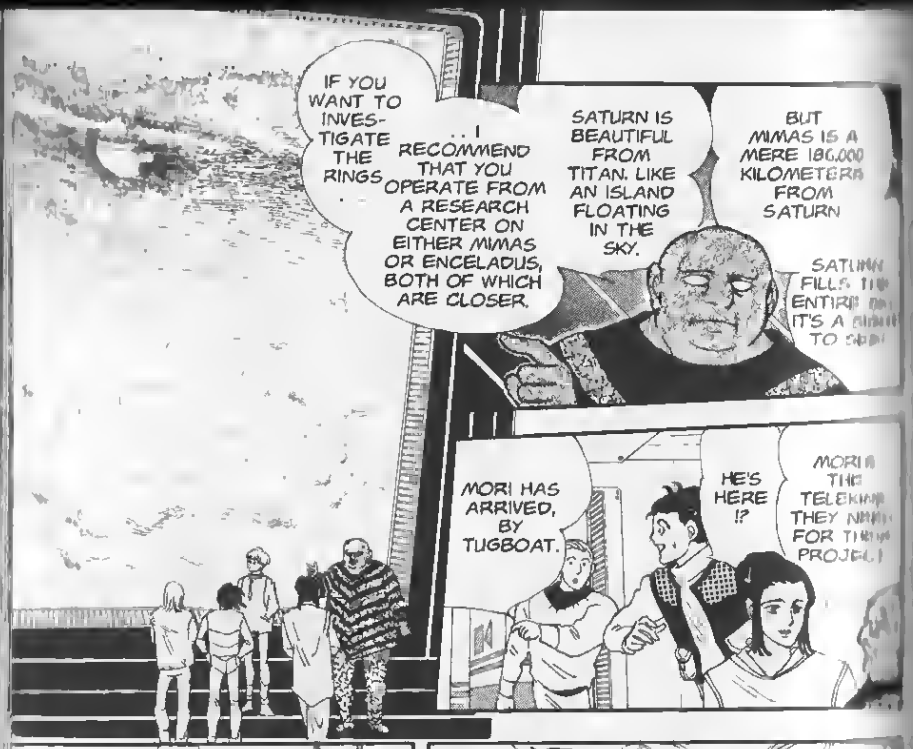

YOU TRIED TO HAVE YOUR WAY WITH HIM OR SOMETHING?
WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE!?
YOU KNOW! MORI! THE ONE WHO MADE THE ICARUS II!
WE WERE WITH HIM ON MARS JUST THREE DAYS AGO!
IN THAT CASE, TACTO MUST PAY HIM FOR THE KITE.
QUIT FOOLING AROUND, TACTO!
TACTO...
...ISN'T EMOTIONALLY SOPHISTICATED ENOUGH TO TELL LIES OR MAKE JOKES
BUT YOU TWO GOT ALONG SO WELL!
TACTO DOESN'T KNOW HIM
AND YOU DON'T CUR
WELL, YOU MUST HAVE SAID SOMETHING!
WHATEVER IT WAS, IT CAUSED SOME KIND OF SELECTIVE AMNESIA!
THIS IS YOUR FAULT, MORI! TAKE RESPONSIBILITY!


I haven't forgotten him for a single second.
But he forgets me after just THREE DAYS!
Why is it my fault?
That fight was—


Huh?
Reso-nance!?
It can't be!


Could I have...
"YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT ME AT ALL!!"
...planted a suggestion in his mind!?
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO SATURN?
THERE'S A CONNECTING FLIGHT LEAVING FROM GATE THREE IN FOUR HOURS
THIS SHIP IS BOUND FOR NEPTUNE, VIA TITAN.
PLEASE ENJOY YOUR TRIP TO THE OUTER SOLAR SYSTEM.
WE WILL BE ARRIVING AT TITAN IN FIVE DAYS.


...m If he's so susceptible to my suggestions...
Tacto.
Fall in love with me.
Mori.
What are you daydreaming about, Mori!?
This is serious!





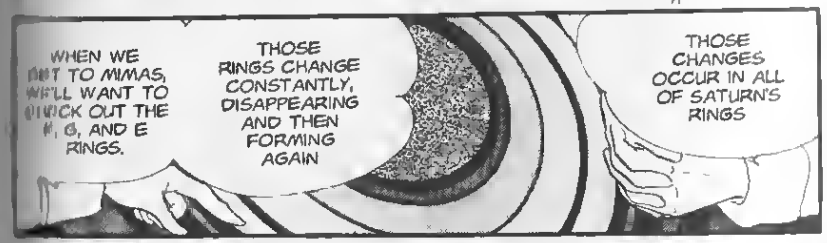




I've never seen him like this.

I guess he was a lot more talkative when he was with me on Mars than he usually is.

So this is what he's usually like?





Resonance. . .

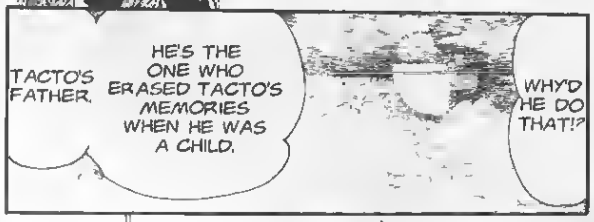
I guess I could fix it by somehow resonating with him again.

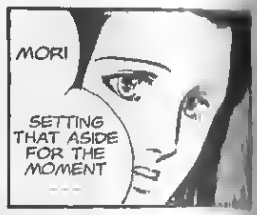
But he's not just a blank slate. He's completely withdrawn.

I don't know what chord in his heart to strike. . .


MORI
I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT TACTO . . .
. . .HAS NO MEMORY OF ANYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO HIM BEFORE THE AGE OF SEVEN.
NO MEMORY . . .
. . .OF ANYTHING . . .?

AND NOW HE'S LOST HIS MEMORY AGAIN.
THERE MAY BE A CONNECTION.
I'M GOING TO TRY TO CONTACT PROFESSOR MOONSAULT IN THE TROJAN ASTEROID BELT
PROFESSOR MOONSAULT?


TACTO'S FATHER.
HE'S THE ONE WHO ERASED TACTO'S MEMORIES WHEN HE WAS A CHILD.
WHY'D HE DO THAT!?

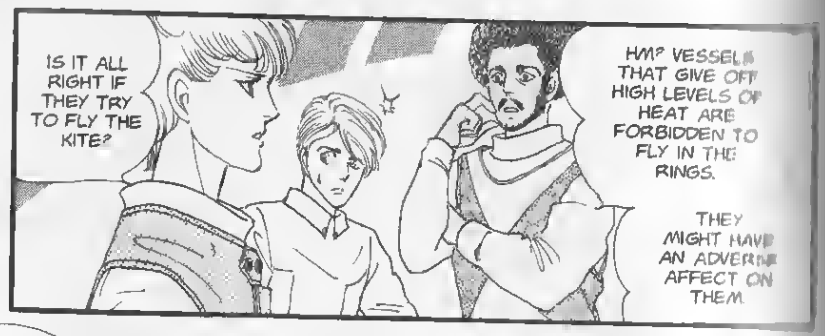

MORI
SETTING THAT ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT . . .

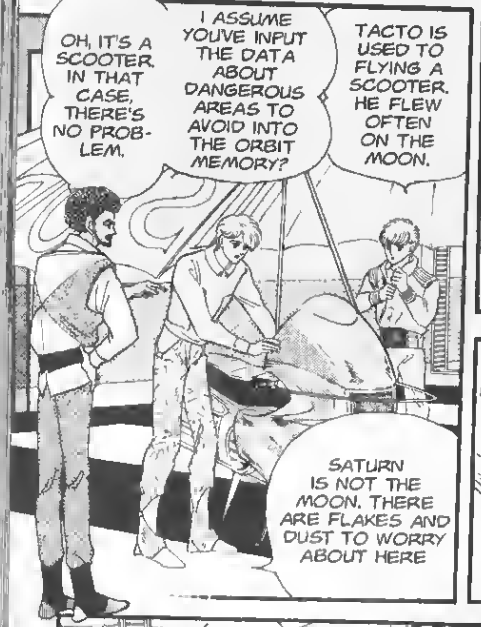

. . .AREN'T YOU FORGETTING ABOUT YOUR PRETERNATURAL POWERS?
TACTO'S MEMORY LOSS MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY YOUR FAULT.
. . .BUT YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS RESONANCE THING. I WANT YOU TO BE MORE CAREFUL.


TACTO HAS A LOT OF PROBLEMS, AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IS TOO DANGEROUS . . .
I'M AGAINST IT
KEEP THAT IN MIND WHILE WE'RE ON MIMAS

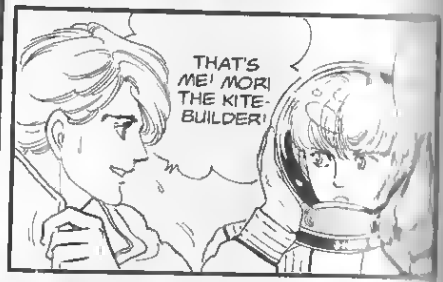

VIEWED FROM MIMAS, SATURN IS UNBELIEVABLE!
I FORGET . . . HOW MANY SATELLITES DOES SATURN HAVE?
THERE ARE SIX THAT ARE BIGGER THAN MIMAS— ENCELADUS, TETHYS, DIONE, RHEA, TITAN, AND IAPETUS.


OF THE EIGHT MAJOR SATELLITES, ONLY HYPERION IS SMALLER THAN MIMAS
NEAR THE G RING ARE EPIMETHEUS AND JANUS, WHICH ARE CO-ORBITAL
THERE ARE ALSO TWO "SHEPHERD SATELLITES," PROMETHEUS AND PANDORA, WHICH ORBIT OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE F RING
AND THEN THERE'S ATLAS, NEAR THE A RING, WITH A DIAMETER OF FORTY KILOMETERS. THERE ARE TOO MANY TO COUNT

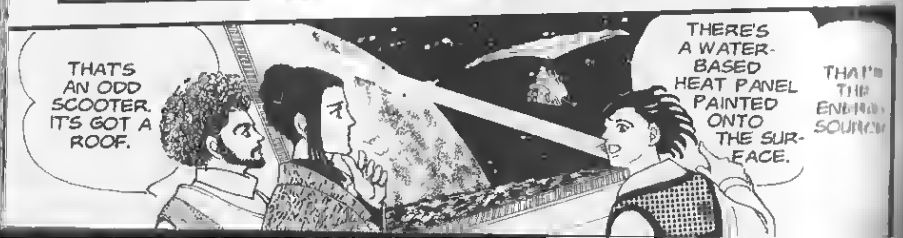

IS IT ALL RIGHT IF THEY TRY TO FLY THE KITE?
HM? VESSELS THAT GIVE OFF HIGH LEVELS OF HEAT ARE FORBIDDEN TO FLY IN THE RINGS.
THEY MIGHT HAVE AN ADVERSE AFFECT ON THEM.


OH, IT'S A SCOOTER. IN THAT CASE, THERE'S NO PROBLEM.
I ASSUME YOU'VE INPUT THE DATA ABOUT DANGEROUS AREAS TO AVOID INTO THE ORBIT MEMORY?
TACTO IS USED TO FLYING A SCOOTER. HE FLEW OFTEN ON THE MOON.
SATURN IS NOT THE MOON. THERE ARE FLAKES AND DUST TO WORRY ABOUT HERE

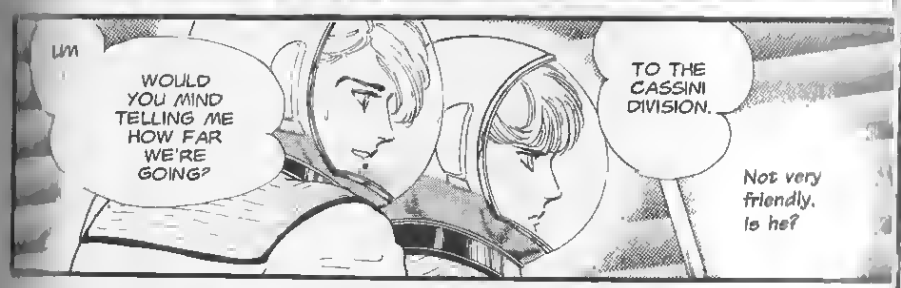

IS IT ALL RIGHT IF I GO WITH YOU?
I MEAN, HEY, I'M THE ONE WHO BUILT THE KITE, RIGHT?


THAT'S ME! MORI THE KITE-BUILDER!


WELL, THEN . .
THEY'LL BE BACK IN ABOUT AN HOUR.

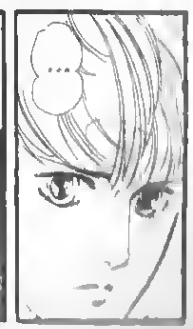

THAT'S AN ODD SCOOTER. IT'S GOT A ROOF.
THERE'S A WATER-BASED HEAT PANEL PAINTED ONTO THE SURFACE.
THAT'S THE ENGINE SOURCE


WE'RE REALLY MOVING!
WHAT'S OUR SPEED?
FORTY ONE
THIS IS TOP-OF-THE LINE SCOOTER, ISN'T IT?
SO... HOW FAR ARE WE GOING?


UM
WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME HOW FAR WE'RE GOING?
TO THE CASSINI DIVISION.
Not very friendly, is he?


WHAT DO YOU SAY WE MOVE CLOSER TO THE RINGS?
THEY'LL RUN INTO DUST.


SO WE JUST TURN UP THE BARRIER
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO SEE THE RINGS FROM A SCOOTER.
REMEMBER?


...


HE SAID HE WANTED TO SEE THE RINGS FROM A SCOOTER . . .
THAT'S RIGHT!
WHO DID YOU SAY THAT TO?
WHO . . ?
WHO DID YOU SAY THAT TO? WHO WAS WITH YOU WHEN YOU SAID THAT?
WHO . . ?
WHO WAS IT?
THERE WAS SOME-ONE THERE
IT WAS ME!
ME! YOU SAID THAT TO ME!
IT'S ME, TACTO!
TACTO!
RE-MEMBER ??!!
BEEP!


W-WAH !!
BWWWWWW-
FLAKES!! TACTO . . .
TACTO!


UMPH.
EHEM.
YES? WHAT IS IT?


PRO-FESSOR WRIGHT MOONSAULT ?
I'M AN-AN, GEORGE'S WIFE.
I'VE COME TO SATURN WITH TACTO AND HIS FRIENDS.


TACTO, YOU SAY?
HMM.
MY SON, EH?
HE MUST BE ABOUT SIXTEEN NOW.
YES SIR. I'M SURE YOU'LL WANT TO SEE HIM. THERE'S SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU ABOUT TACTO.


WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS— EHEM— HONEY. . .
. . .BUT I'M HIS FATHER IN NAME ONLY.
IF THERE'S A PROBLEM YOU SHOU TALK TO GEORGE


"Honey" . . . ?
PROFESSOR MOONSAULT , THREE WEEKS AGO, I CHECKED TACTO'S DNA


TACTO IS XX.

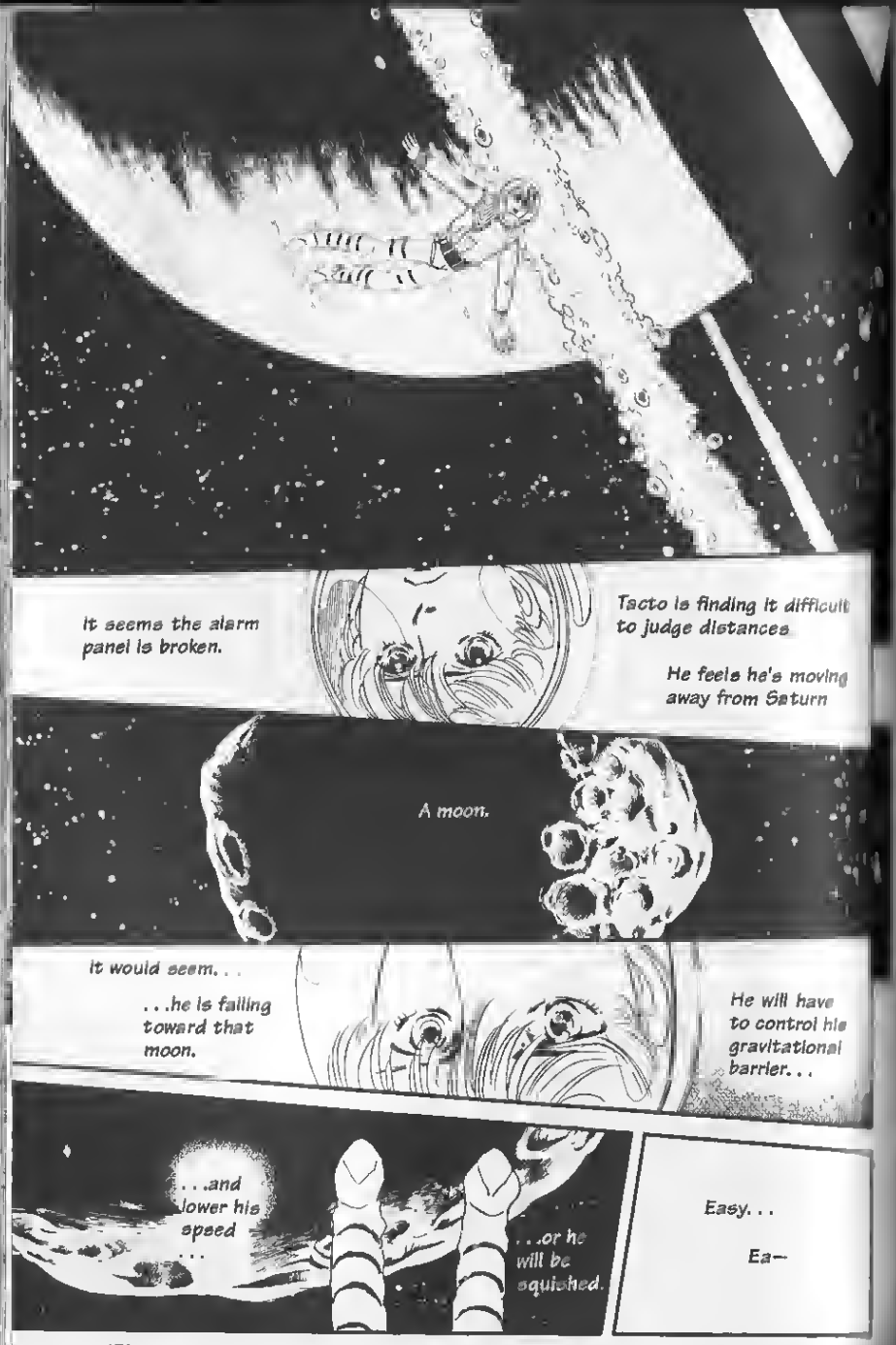

HE HAS A GIRLFRIEND AND HE SAYS HE WANTS TO REMAIN A MAN
I'D LIKE YOU TO TALK TO HIM AND ENCOURAGE HIM TO UNDERGO A SEX CHANGE
AS HIS FATHER, PRO-FESSOR MOONSAULT, I'M SURE—
UM . . .


PRO-FES-SOR!
TUMP

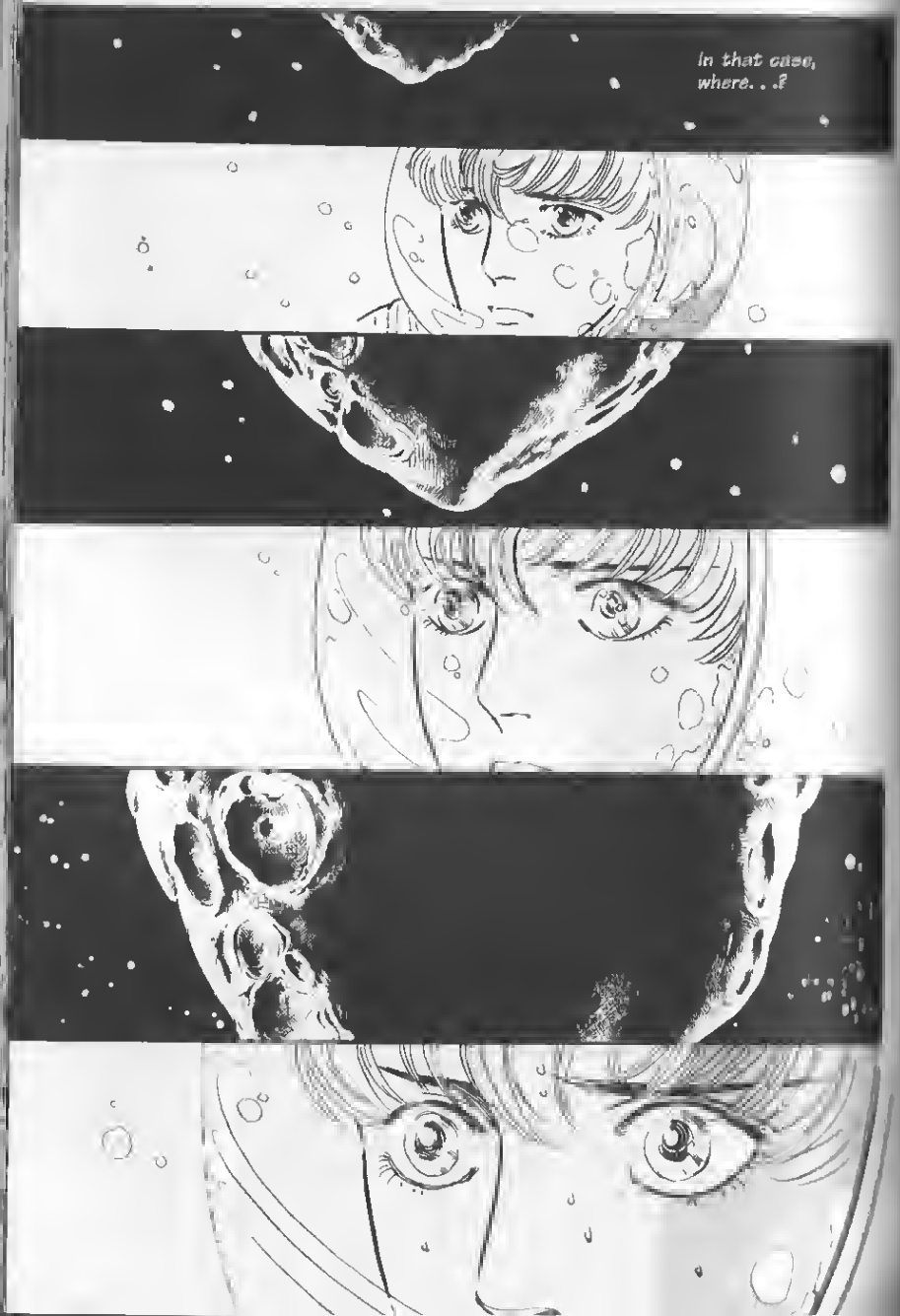

IS SOMEONE ELSE THERE!? THE PRO-FESSOR HAS—
I'M SORRY. THE PROFESSOR HAS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
PLEASE CALL BACK AGAIN LATER


It must have been a big shock for him.
I wonder if he'll talk to Tacto for me.
AN-AN!


THE ICARUS II IS MISSING!
THERE WAS A DISTRESS SIGNAL, BUT IT DISAPPEARED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.


it seems the alarm panel is broken.
Tacto is finding it difficult to judge distances
He feels he's moving away from Saturn
A moon.
it would seem. . .
. . .he is falling toward that moon.
He will have to control his gravitational barrier. . .
. . .and lower his speed . . .
. . .or he will be squished.
Easy. . .
Ea—


Judging from the rate at which the snowflakes are falling. . . I wonder if this is Mimas.
Perhaps I'm on the other side of Mimas.
Hm?
That's a ring.
The rings don't look like this from Mimas.

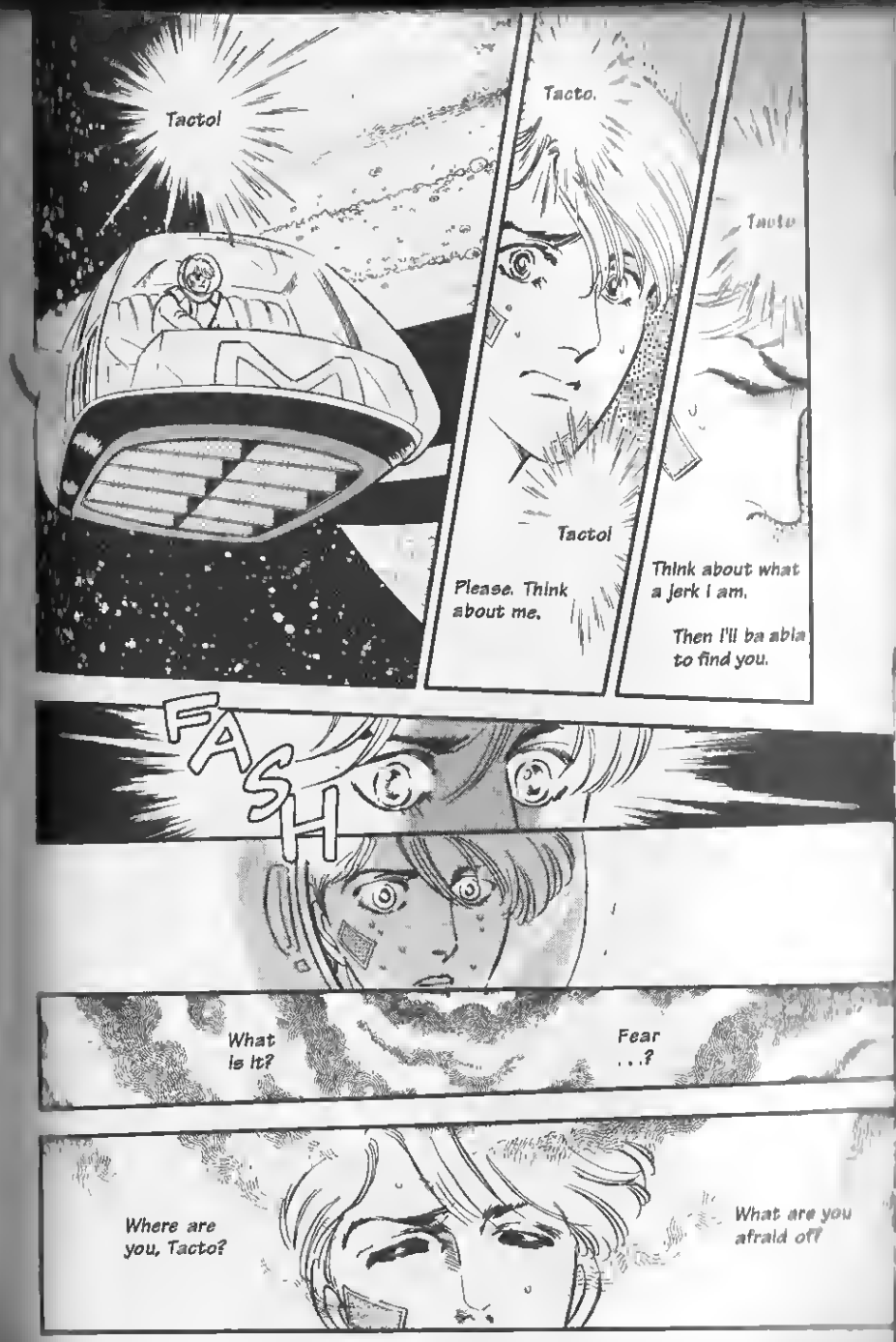

In that case, where. . .?

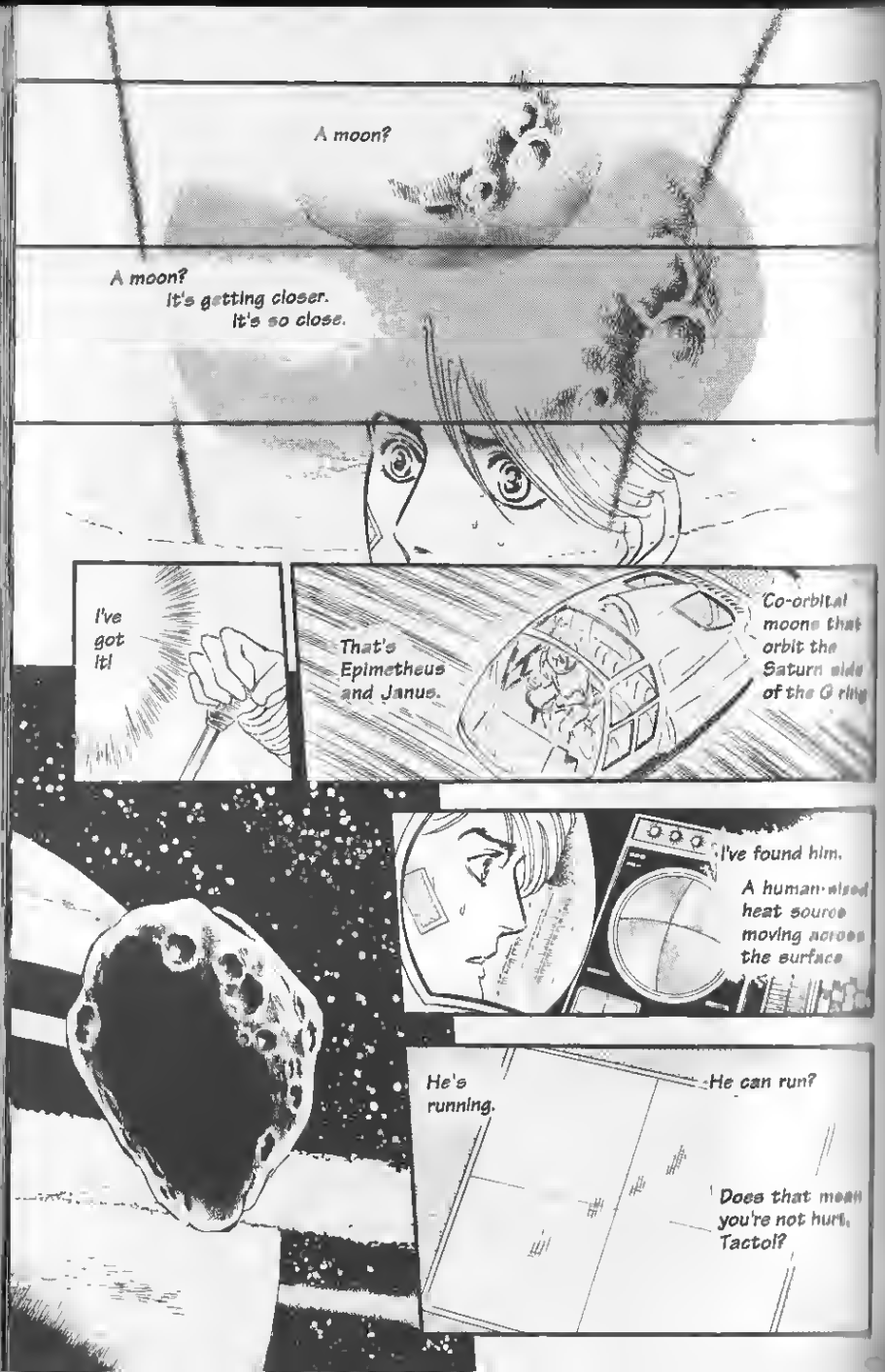



Where's Tacto?
Tacto.
I think I've turned into a snowman.
MORI
MORI.
MORI, CAN YOU HEAR ME!?
!
WHERE'S TACTO!?
WE HAVEN'T FOUND HIM YET.
WE FOUND YOU THREE HOURS AFTER THE ACCIDENT.
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ASLEEP!?
IT'S BEEN SIXTEEN HOURS SINCE THE ACCIDENT


TACTO IS WEARING AN N7-TYPE SUIT, SO THERE'S NO RISK OF HIS OXYGEN RUNNING OUT. BUT IT SEEMS HIS ALARM PANEL ISN'T OPERATING.
WE'VE GOT SEVEN RESCUE BOATS OUT LOOKING FOR HIM
WHERE DID THE ACCIDENT OCCUR?
WE WERE APPROACHING CASSINI... WE RAN INTO FLAKES.
THAT'S RIGHT ON THE BORDER OF THE DANGER ZONE!
IF HE WAS KNOCKED AWAY FROM THE RING, WE WOULD'VE PICKED HIM UP ON RADAR
HE MUST BE SOMEWHERE IN THE RINGS
FOCUS THE SEARCH ON THE A, F, AND G RINGS AND THE SHEPHERD SATELLITES
...
I did it again.
I DID IT AGAIN.
Something terrible that can't be undone.
YOU NEED TO SLEEP YOU WERE STRUCK ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD.
ACTUALLY, YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE TALKING.
FIPP
MORI!!


MORI!
UNH
WAS I HIT IN THE CHEST, TOO?
YOU'VE GOT CRACKS IN SEVEN RIBS. ONCE THE ANESTHETIC WEARS OFF, IT'LL BE TOO PAINFUL TO EVEN BREATHE
MORI!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
TACTO'S STILL ALIVE! BUT I'VE GOT TO HURRY!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
YOU'RE A THIRD-RATE TELEKINE WHO COULDN'T EVEN FORE SEE OR PREVENT THIS ACCIDENT!
AND NOW YOU'RE SAYING YOU CAN FIND TACTO!?
YES!
Mori! You've got to find him!
Please, if you do. . .
If you do, I'll accept your relationship with Tacto. I'll stand behind you.
I don't care if you resonate or not.
Just find him!
THERE'S A SMALL BOAT IN THE ESCAPE HATCH
THAT WAY!
EXIT

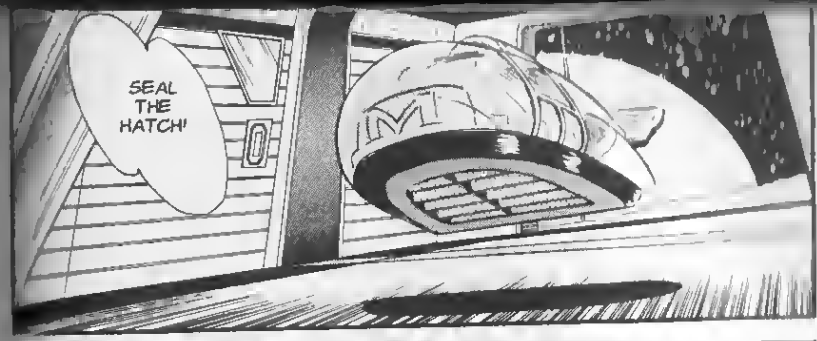

Tacto!
Tacto.
Tacto
Tacto!
Please. Think about me.
Think about what a jerk I am.
Then I'll be able to find you.
FASH
What is it?
Fear . . .?
Where are you, Tacto?
What are you afraid of?


A moon?
A moon?
It's getting closer.
It's so close.
I've got it!
That's Epimetheus and Janus.
Co-orbital moons that orbit the Saturn side of the G ring
I've found him.
A human-sized heat source moving across the surface
He's running.
He can run?
Does that mean you're not hurt, Tacto!?


Tacto!
TACTO!
Tacto's afraid.
Afraid.
Afraid!
IT'S GOING TO CRASH!


TACTO
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT'S NOT GOING TO HIT US.
Thank god.
IT'S FALL-ING!
EVERY 39 YEARS THEY GET CLOSE TO EACH OTHER. THAT'S ALL.
SEE? IT'S MOVING AWAY

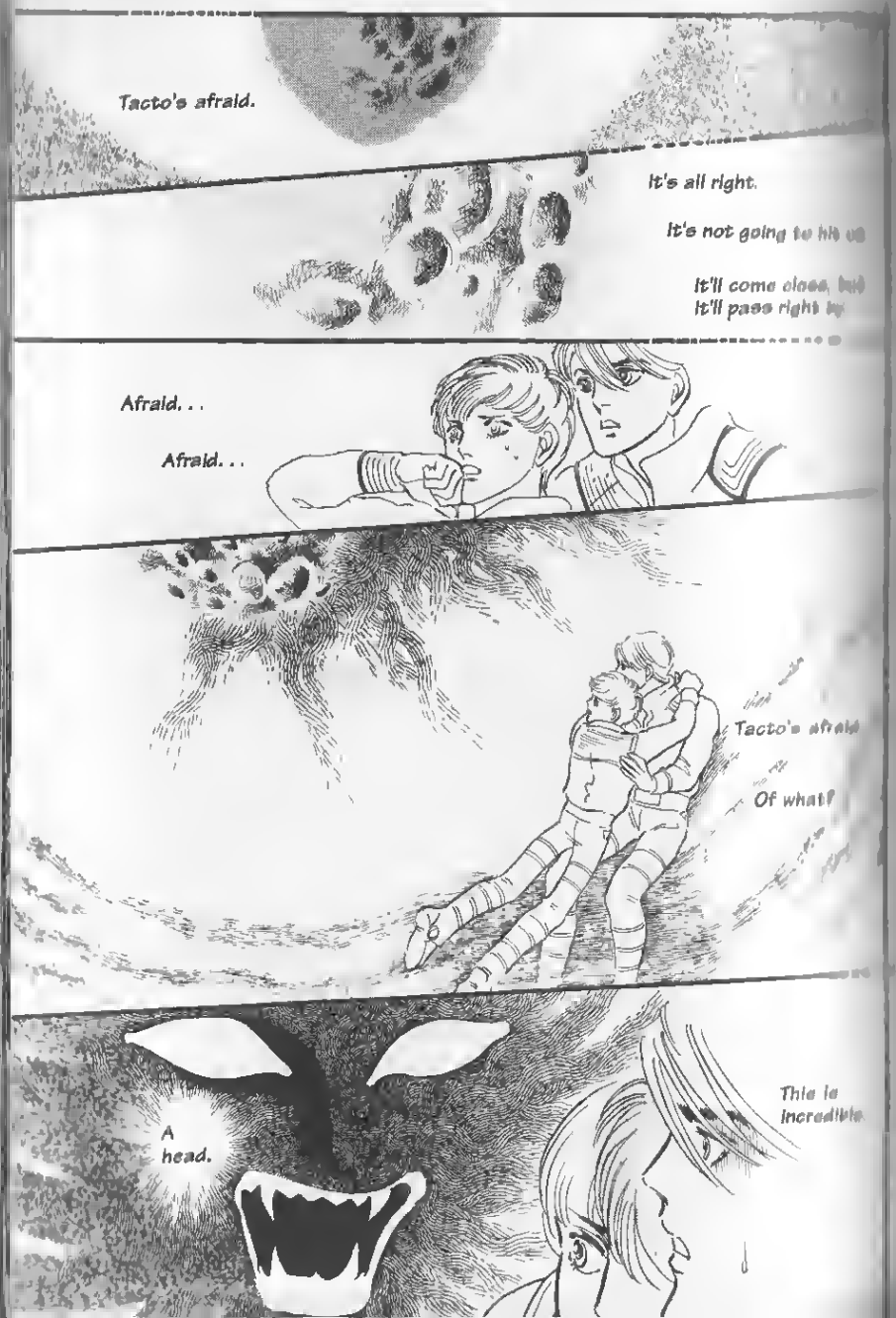

I FOUND TACTO.
I'M GOING TO BRING TACTO BACK
WE'VE PICKED UP YOUR BOAT.
WE'LL FLY IT IN FOR YOU. YOU DON'T NEED TO DO ANYTHING.
IT'S COMING AFTER TACTO!
Ouch...
Looks like the anesthetic's wearing off.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

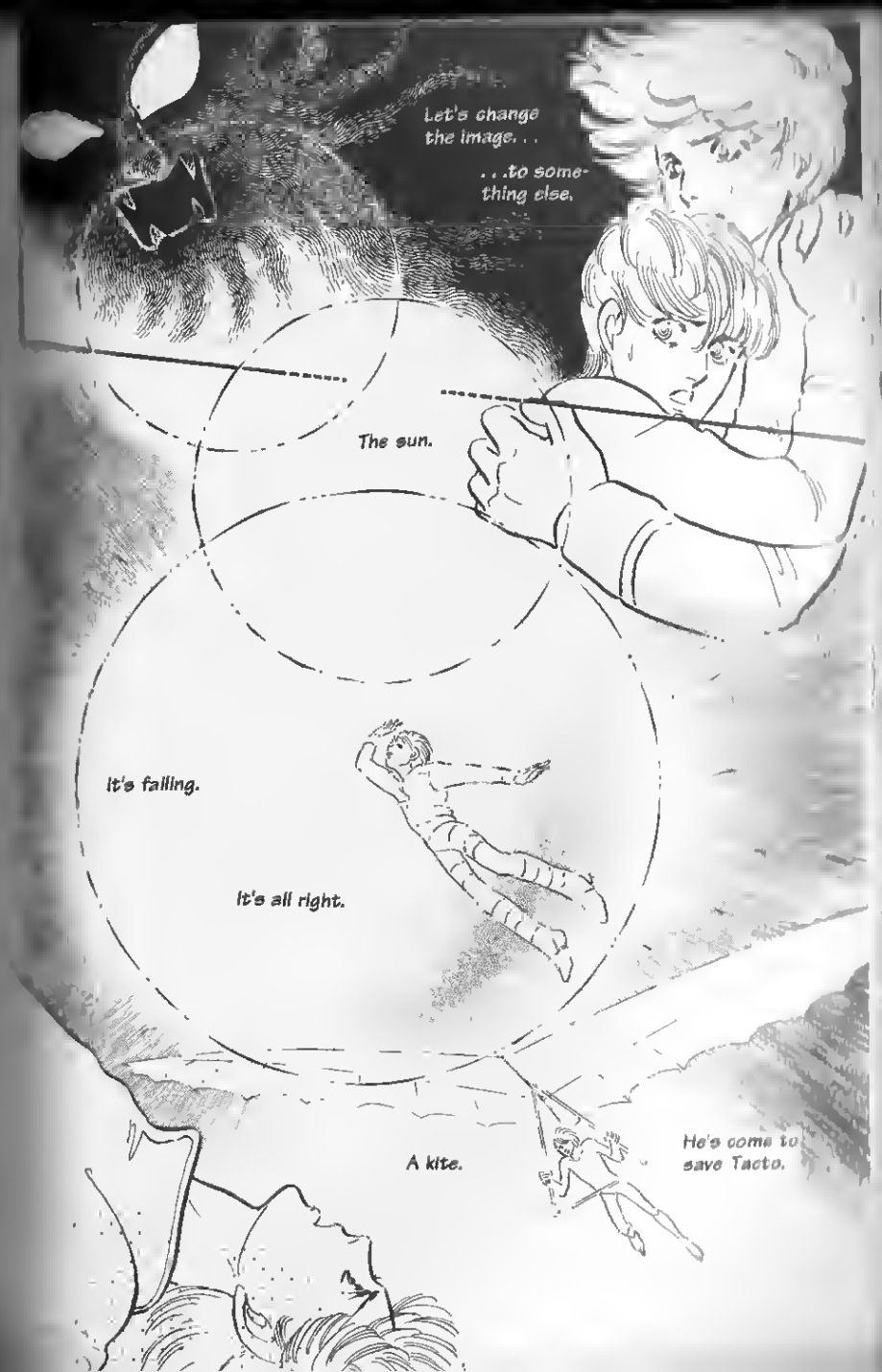

SEAL THE HATCH!


BAM
MORI!
TACTO!
GET THEM TO THE INFIR-MARY!


NO-O-O-O!!


WE'VE TAKEN CARE OF MORI AND PUT HIM TO SLEEP.
DOES TACTO HAVE SOME KIND OF NEUROSIS? HE UNDERWENT SOME KIND OF A FIT THE MOMENT THEY LANDED.
NOT THAT I KNOW OF
WELL, HE'S CALMED DOWN NOW.

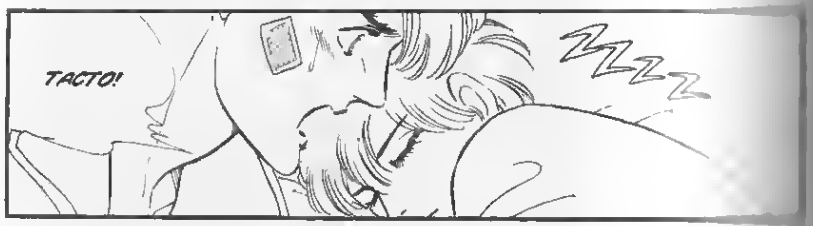

Tacto's afraid.
It's all right.
It's not going to hit us
It'll come close, but
It'll pass right by
Afraid. . .
Afraid. . .
Tacto's afraid
Of what?
A
head.
This is
incredible


Let's change
the image. . .
. . .to some-
thing else.
The sun.
It's falling.
It's all right.
A kite.
He's come to
save Tacto.


It's the Icarus.
Mori.
BAM
The sound of a door.
PAT PAT PAT
MORI.
Am I still dreaming?


MORI WAS FLYING IN TACTO'S DREAM, ON A KITE.
I KNOW. WE MADE THE DREAM TOGETHER.
SO YOU REMEMBER ME, TACTO?
YEAH.
YOUNG MORI THE ONE WHO WAS FLYING THE WHITE AND GOLD KITE!
ARE YOU STILL AFRAID?
...
A LITTLE.
BUT MORI'S HERE
...


WH-WH-WH-WHAT'RE YOU DOING!?

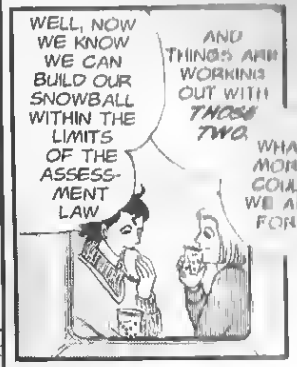

TACTO!
ZZZZ


...


OUCH!




YOU CAN GO TO THE TROJAN ASTEROID BELT...
...BUT YOUR INJURIES HAVEN'T HEALED YET, MORI, SO YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE IT EASY.
I WANT YOU TO STAY IN BED SIXTEEN HOURS A DAY


WELL, NOW WE KNOW WE CAN BUILD OUR SNOWBALL WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE ASSESS-MENT LAW
AND THINGS ARE WORKING OUT WITH THOSE TWO.
WHAT MORE COULD WE ASK FOR?


Yes, but can Mori control his powers?
Oh, well. We'll just have to wait and see.

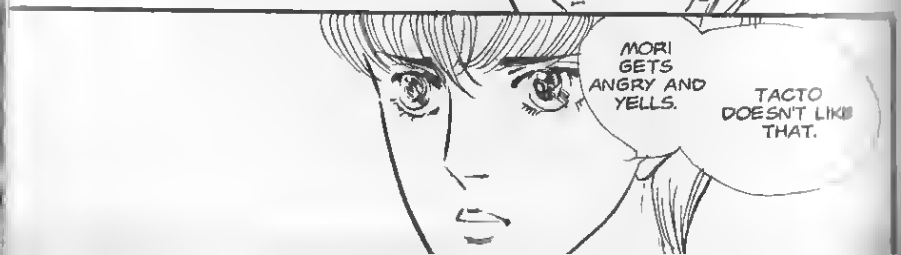

WHEN MORI GETS BETTER, TACTO AND MORI WILL PAIR.
PAIR?


THEY HAVE TO SEE IF THEY'RE COMPAT-IBLE IN BED.
PFFT!


Is this another suggestion I uncon-sciously planted in him?
UH...







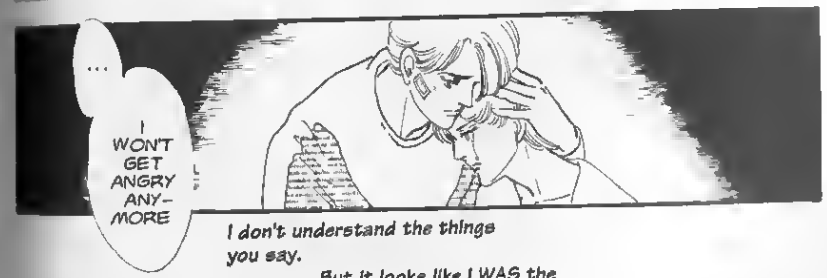








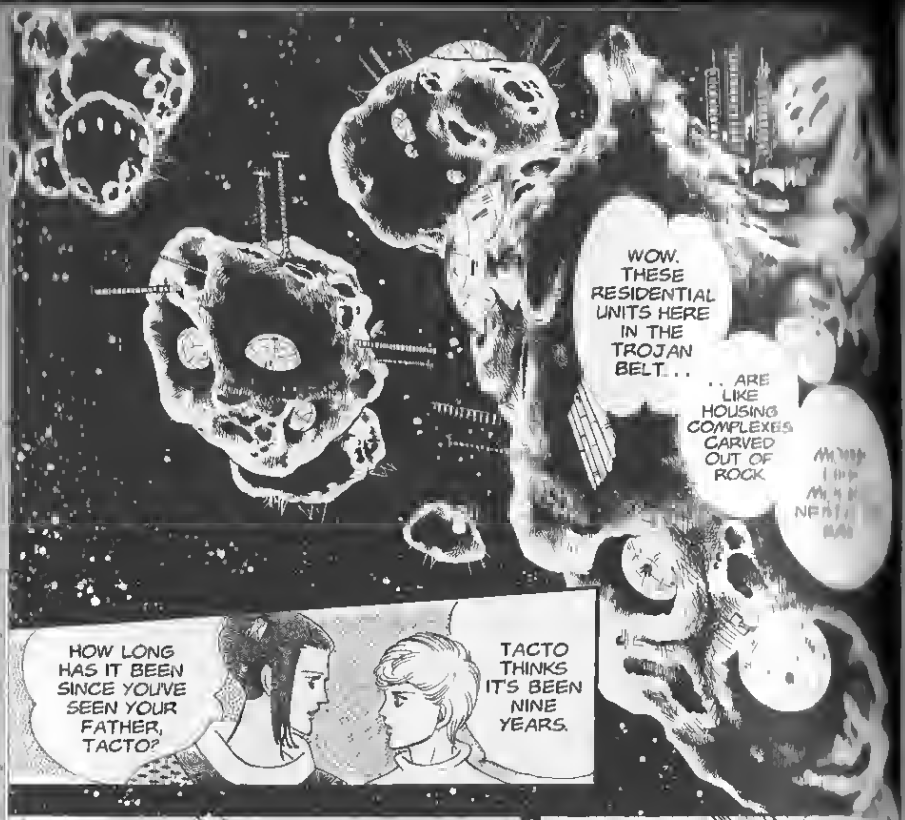




I don't understand the things you say.

But it looks like I WAS the cause. . .

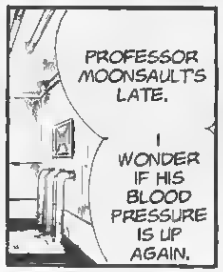
. . .of your temporary memory loss.


WOW. THESE RESIDENTIAL UNITS HERE IN THE TROJAN BELT...
...ARE LIKE HOUSING COMPLEXES CARVED OUT OF ROCK.
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU'VE SEEN YOUR FATHER, TACTO?
TACTO THINKS IT'S BEEN NINE YEARS.


WHAT? YOU MEAN YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE YOU PARTED AT THAT HOSPITAL IN HONG KONG?
TACTO REMEMBERS HIS FATHER FEEDING HIM PUDDING WITH A SPOON


MY BLOOD PRESSURE IS FINE. WELCOME TO OUR 'MOLE'S NEST.'


TACTO LIKES PUDDING.
...


PROFESSOR MOONSAULT'S LATE.
I WONDER IF HIS BLOOD PRESSURE IS UP AGAIN.


THAT IS RIGHT. IS HE PROFESSOR MOONSAULT?


HMM.


EXCELLENT. YOUR SPEECH USED TO BE MUCH WORSE A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.
SHSH
YOU LOOK LIKE YOUR MOTHER


YOU'RE AN-AN... YOU'RE TACTO'S BABYSITTER, ZAZZ... AND YOU'RE ROMAN. CORRECT?
GEORGE SENDS ME LETTERS AND VIDEOS FROM TIME TO TIME


WHO'S THE LAD WHO'S BLUSHING OVER THERE?


HE IS MORI.
MORI?
TACTO'S ..FRIEND.


EHEM!


SO, AN-AN. YOU WANT ME TO ENCOURAGE TACTO TO BECOME A WOMAN BECAUSE HE'S XX?
P-PROFESSOR! SHOULDN'T WE DISCUSS THIS PRIVATELY!?


OH, COME NOW.
EHEM
THEY'VE COME ALL THIS WAY.
HIS FRIENDS SHOULD KNOW THIS, TOO.


YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING TO TACTO. HE'LL TURN INTO A WOMAN WHETHER HE WANTS TO OR NOT.
IT'S IN HIS GENETIC MAKE-UP.
...!


W—
WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "TACTO IS XX"!?


HMPH. FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF HIS LIFE, TACTO CHANGED BACK AND FORTH FROM MALE TO FEMALE EVERY TWO OR THREE MONTHS.


...

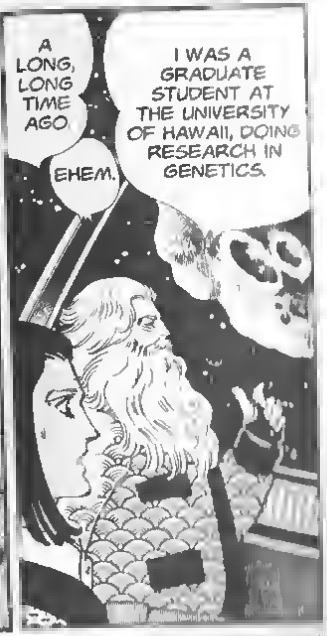

FROM ABOUT THE AGE OF THREE, HE REMAINED MALE, SO I THOUGHT HIS BODY HAD SETTLED DOWN.
BUT IF HE HAS BECOME XX AGAIN ...
YOU MEAN THERE'S A CHANCE HE'LL CHANGE AGAIN!?
THERE IS.


WHICH DOES MORI PREFER?
WHICH DO I—!?
TACTO! THIS IS YOUR BODY WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!
THINK FOR YOURSELF FOR ONCE!


THINK


LET ME TELL YOU A STORY.


TACTO HAS NO PREFERENCE

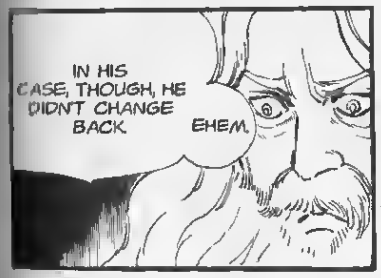

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.
EHEM.
I WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, DOING RESEARCH IN GENETICS.











That's why we snuck off to Hong Kong.

We tried everything we could to change Marble back into a man.

After three years, we gave up.




Everything was wonderful then. If only things could have remained that way.
But the birth must have triggered a change in Marble's physiological makeup.
One month after the birth, Marble changed [illegible] into a man!

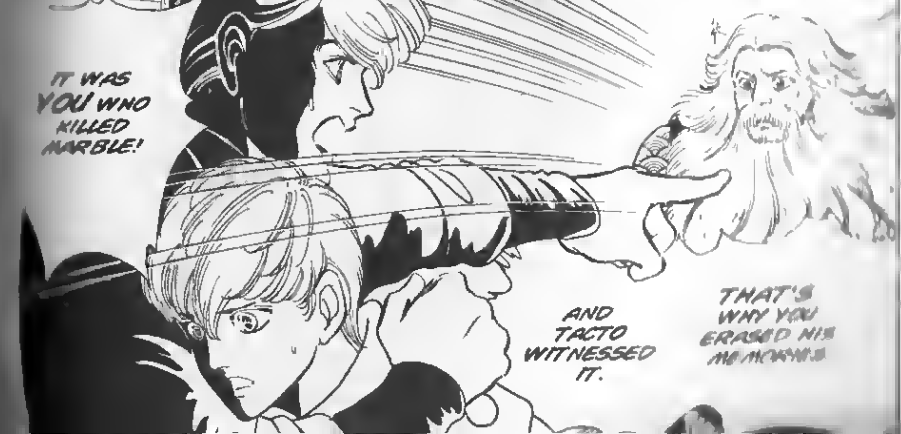

PRO-FESSOR!
THEN . .
. . YOU MEAN TO SAY . . .
. . TACTO IS . . !
YES. HE IS OUR SON, MARBLE'S AND MINE.
MARBLE WANTED TO CHANGE BACK A WOMAN, BUT [illegible] HAD DEVELOPED RESISTANCE TO [illegible] MEDICATION AND DIDN'T WORK ANY MORE.
MARBLE BECAME DESPOND-ENT.
HE BECAME AN ALCOHOLIC . . .
. . . THEN TURNED TO HEROIN.
WHEN TACTO WAS SIX . .
. . HE KILLED HIM-SELF.
TAC!


TACTO!
!


NO! THERE'S NO NEED TO REMEM-BER THESE THINGS, TACTO!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING AT ALL!
I ERASED ALL THOSE MEM-ORIES!


WHY DID YOU DO THAT!?

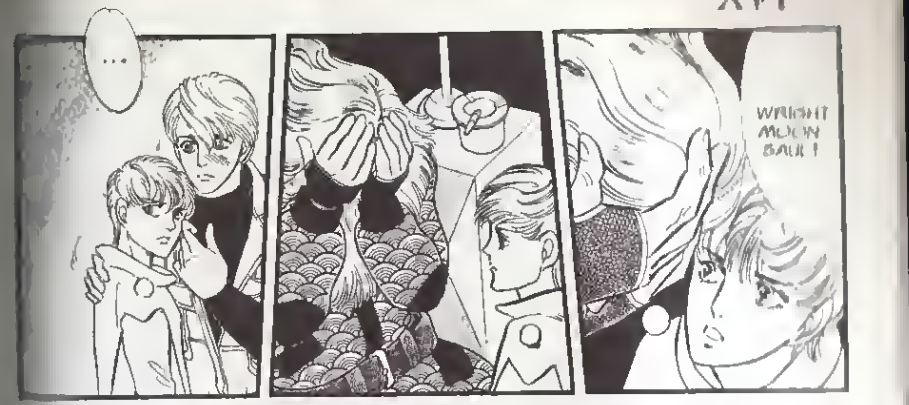

TACTO IS EXTRAORDINARILY SENSITIVE TO EMOTIONAL STRESS. . .
THIS WAS A LONG, LONG TIME AGO . .
NOW I SEE!

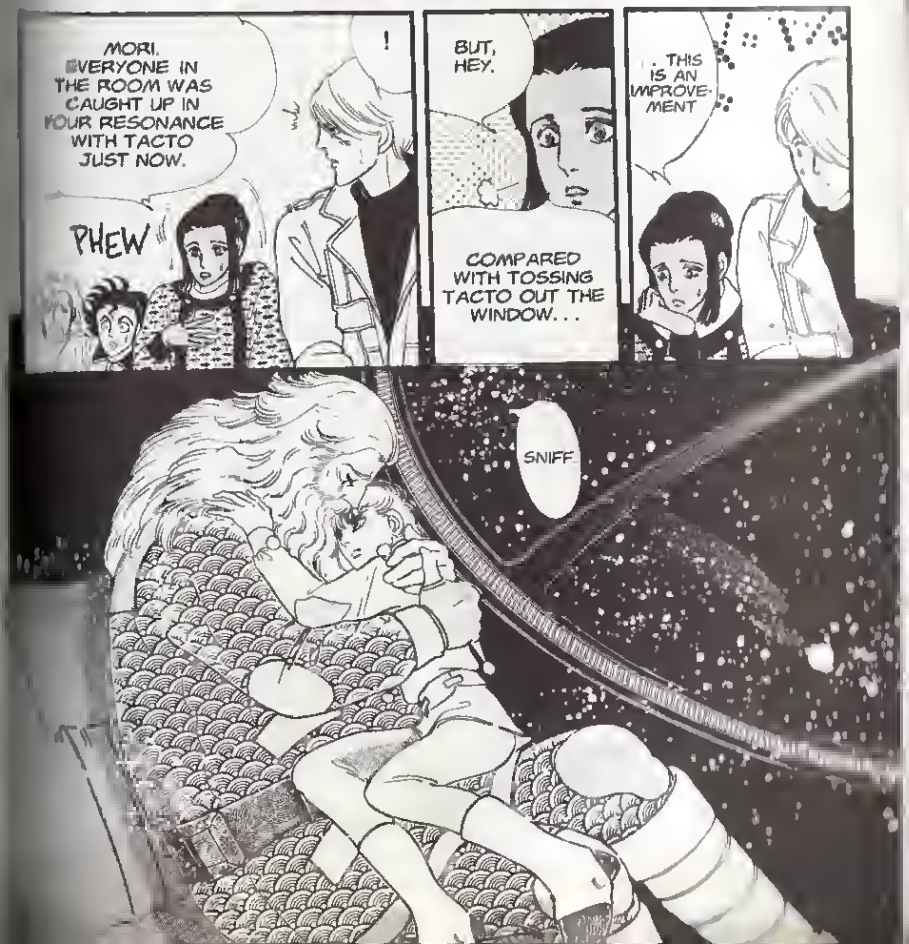

IT WAS YOU WHO KILLED MARBLE!
AND TACTO WITNESSED IT.
THAT'S WHY YOU ERASED HIS MEMORIES

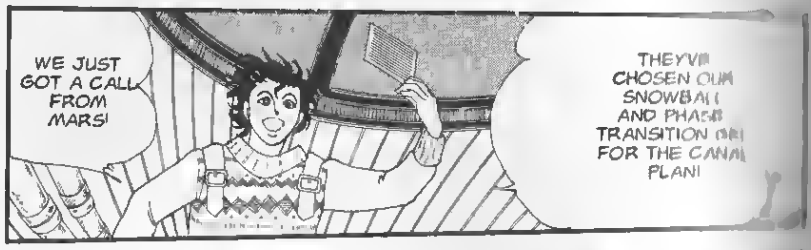

...
TACTO!
YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER!
OTHERWISE..
...YOU'LL BE CHASED BY THAT NAME FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!
FLUMP
MORI! THE PROFESSOR HAS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE!
WHAT IS IT YOU'RE AFRAID OF!?
WHAT!?
IF...
IF YOU LEAVE ME..
I'LL...
I'LL KILL MYSELF.

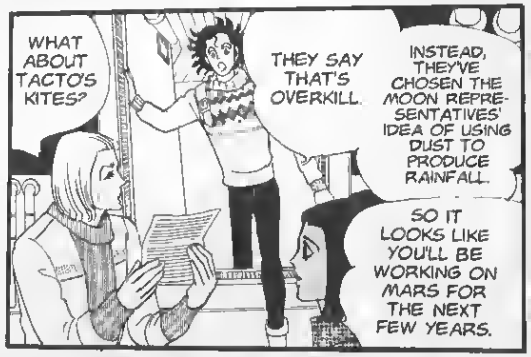

THE EYES.
MAMA'S..
EYE.
ARE WATCHING
WATCHING
MAMA'S EYES ARE GOING TO CLOSE.
CLOSE THEM.
CLOSE MAMA'S EYES FOR HER, TACTO


That black star closing in on him. . .
That was the seal.
The memories his father had stolen from him.
No matter how terrifying or painful they may be, if he can just see them tangibly
. . .the seal will be broken
MAMA.
MOMMY.
You may not have been able to bear it as a small child. . .
. . .but now you can understand.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I KILLED HIM.
I RAN AROUND WITH OTHER WOMEN.
I ABANDONED HIM.
I PUSHED HIM TO SUICIDE
I WAS THE ONE WHO WANTED TO FORGET EVERYTHING


. . .
WRIGHT MOON BAUK!


MORI. EVERYONE IN THE ROOM WAS CAUGHT UP IN YOUR RESONANCE WITH TACTO JUST NOW.
!
PHEW
BUT, HEY.
COMPARED WITH TOSSING TACTO OUT THE WINDOW. . .
. . THIS IS AN IMPROVEMENT
SNIFF


WE JUST GOT A CALL FROM MARS!
THEY'VE CHOSEN OUR SNOWBALL AND PHASE TRANSITION GIRL FOR THE CANAL PLAN!


WHAT ABOUT TACTO'S KITES?
THEY SAY THAT'S OVERKILL.
INSTEAD, THEY'VE CHOSEN THE MOON REPRESENTATIVES' IDEA OF USING DUST TO PRODUCE RAINFALL.
SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL BE WORKING ON MARS FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

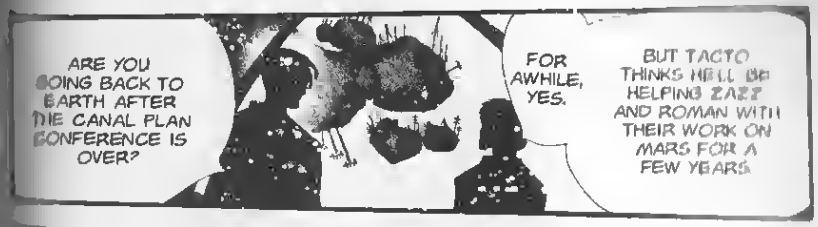

THAT'S AWFUL


THEY SKIPPED OVER TACTO AND PICKED YOU AND ROMAN!?
WELL, IF THAT'S THE CASE, I MIGHT JUST HAVE TO DO SOME RECONSIDERING.
TACTO HAS HOOKED UP WITH A BOY NAMED MORI
I'D WOULDN'T MARRY HIM IF YOU BEGGED ME


WHA—
WHAT A THING TO SAY!
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO MEAN TO ME, ZAZZI?


YOU KNOW IT'S MY DREAM TO BE MARRIED TO SOMEONE FAMOUS!
WAAH
BUT YOU NEVER HELP ME AT ALL!
HEY, I'M GOING TO BE FAMOUS, YOU KNOW!


I'M PICKY ABOUT LOOKS!


ARE YOU GOING BACK TO EARTH AFTER THE CANAL PLAN CONFERENCE IS OVER?
FOR AWHILE, YES.
BUT TACTO THINKS HE'LL BE HELPING ZAZZI AND ROMAN WITH THEIR WORK ON MARS FOR A FEW YEARS.


YOUR FEELINGS AREN'T GOING TO CHANGE WHEN YOU SEE MERIMÉ BACK ON EARTH?
NO.
...


TACTO PREFERS MORI.
I WISH I COULD BE SURE


I MEAN, YOU DON'T EVEN SEEM TO HAVE ANY CONSCIOUSNESS OF BEING IN LOVE.


MORI WAS FLYING.


ON A WHITE AND-GOLD KITE


MORI LOOKED LIKE A WINGED ICARUS.
ICARUS CAME FALLING DOWN . . .
. . . ONTO THE GROUND, NEXT TO TACTO.
This time, I think I understand what Tacto's trying to say.



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